

DOCTORAL THESIS

Experimental Fiction, Transliteracy & Gaudy Bauble Towards A Queer Avant--garde Poetics

Waidner, Isabel

Award date:
2016

Awarding institution:
University of Roehampton

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

**Experimental Fiction, Transliteracy &
Gaudy Bauble: Towards A Queer
Avant-garde Poetics**

by

Isabel Waidner

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

Department of English & Creative Writing

University of Roehampton

2016

Declaration of Authorship

I, Isabel Waidner, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own.

Signed:

Date:

Abstract

This practice-led thesis situates the experimental novella *Gaudy Bauble* within the context of interdisciplinary approaches to experimentation which cross the arts, humanities, literature and sciences. The novella and thesis develop a queer avant-garde poetics and writing methodology that I have called transliteracy. Transliteracy builds on my situated and embodied writing practice as a queer identified novelist and nonnative English speaker. I have mobilised the perceived 'otherness' of English to produce narratively and linguistically experimental prose fictions (Waidner, 2010, 2011). Transliteracy develops this practice by sharing agency (the capacity to influence the narrative) across assemblages of human and nonhuman, fictional and real, material and semiotic 'actors', to use the philosopher of science Bruno Latour's (1987, 1999) term for participants in action and process. Transliteracy has allowed me to subvert normative versions of authorship, intentionality, causality, and process in *Gaudy Bauble*, and to produce a radically subverted version of a plot that is intelligible and captivating to the reader. *Gaudy Bauble* inaugurates a genre I have called agential realist fiction, which is original in its genre-bending, gender-bending, interdisciplinary and queer avant-garde orientation.

The practice was further shaped according to a generative constraint, which dictated that the most marginal actors on and beyond the page were made relevant for the plot. This conceptual apparatus is also reflected in the novella's narrative as a 'not quite' detective story: *Gaudy Bauble* stages what happens if previously inconsequential actors are allowed to become effectual, rather than actions located within a conventional protagonist. Enacting an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (Foucault, 1980, p. 81) in fiction, *Gaudy Bauble* stages a landscape of reversed power relations, a locally subverted

surface of emergence in fiction, where radically nonnormative phenomena and imaginaries can come into being. The thesis connects transliteracy to a wider political LGBTQI+ project and agenda.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the University of Roehampton and the Department of English & Creative Writing for awarding me a full Vice Chancellor's Scholarship to undertake the thesis. Emma Jackson for friendship and *The High Horse*. Sara Ahmed & Sarah Franklin for friendship, inspiration, Clerkenwell and their combined libraries which have shaped the thesis. Tahani Nadim & Sophie MacPherson for inspiration and reading *Frantisek Flounders*. Irene Revell for gay bars. Joanna Zylinka & Gary Hall for inspiration and reading *Gaudy Bauble*. Verena von Stackelberg, Charlotte Prodger, Rachel Anderson, & June Melody for friendship. Tina Waidner, Marlies Wöhrle, Alan Cheetham, Nicoline Wöhrle, & Peter Waidner. Heidi Nam for friendship, Anna Norlander for youth. Jeff Hilson, Sebastian Groes, & Kevin McCarron for reading and commenting on the thesis and *Gaudy Bauble*. Peter Jaeger & Adam Roberts for examining the thesis. The Arts Council England for funding *Bubka* and *Bravo, Parrot*. Valerie Walkerdine for inspiration, friendship, and for giving me a job. Ruth Höflich for collaboration and *8fold*. Matthew Fuller for writing experimental fiction and reading *Gaudy Bauble*. Sarah Schulman for reading and commenting on *Gaudy Bauble*. *Club des Femmes*, *Electra*, and *Goldsmiths Centre for Feminist Research* for inspiration and community. Sarah Wood for friendship, Cheam, Cambridge and reading *Gaudy Bauble*. Sarah Wood & Ali Smith for friendship and Cheam. Lisa Blackman for reading *Gaudy Bauble* and commenting on the thesis. Lisa Blackman for inspiring Blulip and others in *Gaudy Bauble*. Lisa Blackman for everything. The thesis and *Gaudy Bauble* are dedicated to Lisa Blackman.

Table of Contents

Abstract	p. 3
Acknowledgements	p. 5
List of Figures	p. 8

PART ONE: THESIS

Introduction

.i Introducing the thesis	p. 10
.ii Introducing <i>Gaudy Bauble</i>	p. 15
.iii Autoethnographic reflections: a queer avant-garde	p. 20
.iv Mobilising estrangement as experimental writing practice: <i>Frantisek Flounders</i> (Waidner, 2011)	p. 25
.v Does form obscure content? <i>Bravo, Parrot</i> (Waidner, 2015c)	p. 28
.vi Linguistic experimentation and innovative content: a split genealogy?	p. 32
.vii Experimentation and criticality	p. 35
.viii Map of chapters	p. 38

1. An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Conceptual Writing and Christian Bök's *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing)

1.0 Introduction to Chapter One	p. 40
1.1 Conceptual writing: the contemporary avant-garde	p. 44
1.2 Uncreativity and the dichotomy between authorship and process	p. 46

1.3 Theory-driven perspectives versus the 'turn to practice' in science and technology studies	p. 50
1.4 The <i>Xenotext Experiment</i> (Bök, 2000s-ongoing)	p. 54
1.4.1 Key player 1: Bök, polymath	p. 56
1.4.2 The authorship controversy: pink microbe or red herring?	p. 59
1.4.3 Key player 2: the microbe, biological determinism and the concept of gene control	p. 63
1.4.4 Additive interdisciplinarity in the <i>Xenotext Experiment</i> versus the entanglement of fact and fiction in transdisciplinary perspectives	p. 67
1.5 Airlifting concepts from science and technology studies into experimental writing?	p. 70
1.6 Conclusion	p. 72

2. Transliteracy: Towards A Queer Avant-Garde Writing Methodology

2.0 Introduction to Chapter Two	p. 74
2.1 Agential networks, distributed forms of attention, and the subversion of narrative in <i>Gaudy Bauble</i>	p. 79
2.1.1 Nonnormativity in <i>Gaudy Bauble</i>	p. 81
2.2 The constraint: capacitating marginal actors	p. 83
2.3 The case study: how transliteracy shaped <i>Gaudy Bauble's</i> Icy Pet	p. 86
2.3.1 The pink, brown & coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation design	p. 88
2.3.2 Proto-polyester: googling as strategy	p. 93
2.3.3 The Icy Pet as an actor: towards the <i>Mördervogel</i>	p. 99
2.4 Conclusion	p. 101
2.4.1 Revitalising literary innovation	p. 103

3. Agential Realist Fiction: Nonconforming sexes and genders in Brigid Brophy's *In Transit* (1969/2002) and *Gaudy Bauble*

3.0 Introduction: <i>Gaudy Bauble</i> as a development of postmodernist fiction	p. 106
3.1 Poststructuralist analyses of Brigid Brophy's <i>In Transit</i> (1969/2002): deconstruction, social constructionism, antirealism	p. 111
3.2 <i>In Transit's</i> proto-performative experiments with posthuman sexes and genders	p. 117
3.3 Nonconforming sexes and genders in <i>Gaudy Bauble</i> : Painlevé Hypercamp and AxoLottl	p. 121
3.3.1 Painlevé Hypercamp	p. 122
3.3.2 AxoLottl	p. 124
3.3.3 The love scene	p. 129
3.4 Conclusion: towards agential realist fiction	p. 131

Conclusion	p. 134
-------------------	--------

PART TWO: NOVELLA

Gaudy Bauble	p. 143
---------------------	--------

Bibliography	p. 229
--------------	--------

List of Figures

Fig.1 My out-of-print novella *Bubka* (Waidner, 2010) on Amazon. Screenshot.

Fig. 2 Image from *Frantisek Flounders* (Waidner, 2011, p. 40).

Fig. 3 *A Heap of Language* (Robert Smithson, 1966, pencil drawing).

Fig. 4 *All avant-garde. All the time.* Image from
<http://www.ubu.com/resources/podcast.html>, accessed 6 May 2016.

Fig. 5 U.S. hardcore band *Pink and Brown* (circa 1993-1999).

Fig. 6 *Lizards (No. 101)* (M.C. Escher, 1956, ink, pencil, water colour).

Fig. 7 *L.O.V.E/NOTHING* (Waidner, Matthews, & Hiratsuka, 2003, vinyl sleeve).

Fig. 8: *Loplop Introduces Loplop* (Max Ernst, 1930, oil and various materials on wood).

Fig. 9 Image from *Under the Red Sea* (Hans Hass, 1950, film).

Figs. 10 & 11 Fan posters merging Julio Cortázar with an axolotl,
https://www.flickr.com/photos/dr_befa/3990301405, accessed 7 May 2016.

Fig. 12 Lisa Blackman as Tracey Biryukov Lulip (Blulip).

Fig. 13 Extract from the editorial of *The Arrow Maker #1* (Höflich & Waidner, 2015).

fig. i DIY cover of *Gaudy Bauble*. Contains a cut-out of *Group IX/UW, No. 25, The Dove* (Hilma af Klimt, 1915, oil on canvas).

fig. ii Author photograph.

fig. iii Chemical formula for Perspex.

fig. iv Chemical formula for gold.

fig. v *The Transgender Arabesque* (Tom Brazil, 1995, photography). In *Lust and Comfort* (Shaw, Weaver, Kennerly, 1995), p. 227. Variation in turquoise pencil.

fig. vi Lisa Blackman as Blulip, variation.

Introduction

.i Introducing the thesis

The novella *Gaudy Bauble* and the thesis develop a queer¹ avant-garde² poetics and writing methodology which I have called transliteracy. Transliteracy builds on my long-term writing practice which was shaped within an interdisciplinary, sociocultural context which I have called a 'queer avant-garde' (see .iii). As a gender nonconforming writer and nonnative English speaker, I have recruited my situated "estrangement from the familiar relation to language as compliant medium" (Rasula & McCaffery, 1998, p. x) into my project to produce linguistically and narratively experimental fictions (Waidner, 2010, 2011, 2015c). The thesis and transliteracy developed from my initial questioning of a perceived incompatibility of linguistically explorative prose language and innovative content that appeared to constrain my practice (see .iv and .v). Literary theorist Jed Rasula & poet Steve McCaffery wrote that "[d]eviations from the linguistic norm render works of literature valuable; yet oddly also mark them as unreadable" (1998, p. x). What does it mean if linguistically deviant work counts as unreadable? I argue that a queer avant-garde poetics and writing methodology entails deviation from the linguistic norm

¹ Throughout this thesis, I will use the term queer to refer to someone or something nonnormative (something that cannot be contained within conventional norms, see 2.2.1). This includes, but is not limited to, gender nonconforming and LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex; + indicates inclusivity).

² I will use the terms avant-garde and experimental interchangeably to describe my practice, retaining the connotations of both terms: an *avant-garde* commitment to political subversion; and a commitment to *experimentation*, that is, a subverted form of scientificity in my practice (see .vii).

and deviant content in equal measures. My initial aim was to enact a more generative relationship between linguistic 'deviance' and 'deviant' content in my practice, and to challenge normative presumptions about what counts as unreadable work.

Across the humanities, sciences and mainstream literature, language is usually enacted as a disembodied referential function and independent meaning-making system. For example, sociologist Mariam Motamedi Fraser argues that, usually, "words are understood in relation to language where their significance derives from their role as arbitrary points or marks in a system" (2015, p. x). In order for language to fulfil its most common function, the effective conveyance of content or meaning, its materiality tends to recede into the background. On the contrary, many canonical avant-garde literatures have experimented with language as a thing, object or substance. The anthology *Imagining Language* (Rasula & McCaffery, 1998) provides an overview of diverse, linguistically explorative forms of literature (including Ernst Jandl's *Three Visual Lip-Poems* (1976); James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* (1939); David Melnick's *Men in Aida* (1983); Kurt Schwitters's *Sonata in Urlauten* (1922-1932); Gertrude Stein's *Conditions* (1913); and Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* (c. 55 B.C.)). Counting over 600 pages, the anthology extends the genealogy of linguistic experimentation back to antiquity. While these diverse works and practices complicate the conventional enactment of language as a disembodied function, the thesis argues that canonical avant-garde writing practices tend to enact language as *either* a material event *or* a semiotic function (see .v; Chapter One). I argue that this resulted in a genealogical split in experimental literature, separating linguistically experimental work on the one hand, and narratively innovative work on

the other.³ Arguably, the presumed incompatibility of linguistic experimentation and innovative narrative lies at the root of the contemporary lack of queer avant-garde fictions in the U.K., the U.S., and Canada (see .vi for a development of this argument).

As part of this doctoral study, I have developed my practice more explicitly within existing avant-garde writing practices, specifically conceptual writing (for example Christian Bök's *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing); Chapter One), and postmodernist experimental fiction (for example Brigid Brophy's *In Transit* (1969/2002); Chapter Three). What queer and avant-garde might mean and entail in terms of developing a writing methodology evolved significantly in the context of this research. The Introduction maps out how I have revised, specified and extended my anticipated research trajectory and research objectives over the course of this doctoral study.

Depending on their respective historical and disciplinary context, the thesis argues that diverse avant-garde writing strategies have enacted the normative dichotomy between language as a material event and language as semiotic function (and correlates thereof) in various different ways and combinations. For example, the dichotomy between language as a material event and language as semiotic function might be enacted as a correlative dichotomy between authorship and process in conceptual writing (Chapter One). Or it might be enacted as a dichotomy between the realm of materiality (the real world) and the realm of signification (fictional worlds) in postmodernist fictions. Language might be enacted as an ontologically exceptional entity that is separate from the world; and social constructions (gender, for example) might be

³ Experimental literature[s] are case-specific and nuanced and cannot be contained entirely within the tendencies I have identified in the thesis. For the purpose of developing my existing writing practice, it has been extremely useful to identify structural conservatisms that have shaped many experimental forms of literature, including my own work.

enacted as ontologically separate from unconstructed materiality (biological sex, for example) (Chapter Three).

Via the writing of Donna Haraway (1988/1991, 1997) and Karen Barad (2007) initially, I found that similar dichotomies underpin historical epistemologies (relativism and positivism, for example) that have shaped mainstream approaches to experimentation in the sciences (albeit within a different genealogical and disciplinary context). As a central part of the thesis, I have researched interdisciplinary perspectives that emerged within science and technology studies (STS), in particular in view of my aim to develop my practice beyond preconceived constraints and limitations (see also .v). These perspectives have challenged historical epistemologies (and the dichotomies that underpin them) in the sciences on the grounds of their normativity, and their purchase on epistemological and social power. They have proposed more practice-led approaches to scientific experimentation, including embodied epistemologies (Donna Haraway's situated knowledges (1988/1991), for example; see 1.3); relational ontologies, such as agential realism⁴ (Barad, 2007), figural realism⁵ (Haraway, 1997; Suchman, 2006), or Actor-Network Theory⁶ (Latour, 1987, 1999); and analytics that consider the performativity of experimentation⁷ (Barad, 2007; Blackman, 2014; Despret, 2008;

⁴ Agential realism (Barad, 2007) is a relational ontology that collides Barad's reading of quantum physicist Niels Bohr's (1985-1962) work with theories of performativity (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1980) from within gender studies and philosophy.

⁵ Figural realism is an ontology based on case studies that have shown how certain fictions, concepts, metaphors and imaginaries are always already embodied in what comes to be naturalized within scientific positivism (Haraway, 1997; for related approaches see Barad, 2007; Fox Keller, 1995; Franklin, 2000, for example).

⁶ Actor-Network Theory is an approach that emerged in science and technology studies, and which treats objects (or nonhuman 'actors') as participants in social networks and material-semiotic meaning-making systems (Latour, 1987, 1999, for example).

⁷ In STS and related perspectives, the performativity of experimentation refers to the assumption that scientific experiments produce the phenomena purportedly under

Haraway, 1997; Latour, 1987, 1999; Mol, 2001; Pickering, 1995; Rheinberger, 1997, 2013, for example; see .vi). The thesis engages this scholarship as an analytics through which to refract existing experimental literatures (Chapters One and Three), and through which to develop transliteracy as a method for writing *Gaudy Bauble* (Chapter Two).

Transliteracy is a queer avant-garde writing method that enacts the assumption that distinctions between language as a material event and signifying function; form and content; authorship and process; subjectivity and objectivity; representations and entities represented; language and other material and semiotic apparatuses of production; fictions and facts; social constructions (gender, for example) and unconstructed materiality (biological sex, for example); and theory and practice do not precede, but are being produced, enacted and stabilised within diverse experimental practices, including transliteracy (Chapter Two). Central to the thesis are two case studies from *Gaudy Bauble* (2.3-2.3.3; 3.3-3.3.3). They evidence the way in which I have employed transliteracy to displace the aforesaid dichotomies, and to engender what I have termed nonnormative fictions, texts, characters and entities, in and beyond the novella. Nonnormativity, I argue, underpins the queer avant-garde poetics which is in formation in *Gaudy Bauble*.

Further, the thesis and novella develop a new genre which I call agential realist fiction (Chapter Three and Conclusion). Agential realist fiction destabilises the distinction between practice and content in an innovative way (.ii; Chapters Two and Three; Conclusion). In most writing practices, meaningful "connections are established largely with reference to other words" (Fraser, 2015, p. x). But "[w]hat is done and undone when

investigation. See 2.0 for a more detailed discussion of the concept in view of how it has shaped my method of transliteracy.

words are released from word-word associations and enter into multi-dimensional collaborations with other sorts of creatures"? (ibid) Transliteracy enters words, text, fictions, and *Gaudy Bauble*'s diverse characters into collaborations with other, material and semiotic 'creatures', including myself. The practice connects agential realist fiction explicitly to my own situated context, and real-life LGBTQI+ experiences, concerns, and politics, and I develop these links in Chapter Three.

Incorporating some autoethnographic reflections (.iii), I will stage some of the tensions that emerged in my work prior to starting this doctoral thesis and that shaped this practice-led space of enquiry (.iv and .v). Firstly, I will provide a brief introduction to the novella *Gaudy Bauble* (.ii), including a hypothetical 'blurb' and a copy of *Chapter 1. TULEP* (pp. 148-150).

.ii Introducing *Gaudy Bauble*

Gaudy Bauble is a linguistically experimental and narratively innovative novella which develops a queer avant-garde poetics. The narrative takes place across various locations in Central and South London, "Socialist Britain" (p. 152, 173). The year is "201x" (p. 150), the present, recent past or near future. Blulip is a DIY film-maker, set to start filming a new TV series for Channel 4. Just prior to filming, scriptwriter Gotterbarm goes AWOL without having delivered a script. Private Investigator Belahg arrives at Blulip's to investigate Gotterbarm's disappearance. Paradoxically, P.I. Belahg's experimental approach to the investigation yields the content for Blulip's TV series, superseding the need for the original author and film script. When a rival investigator, P.I. Loveday, arrives, P.I. Belahg's identity and legitimacy come into question. If P.I.

Loveday is the P.I. that Blulip has called for, who is P.I. Belahg? As a result of diverse cooperative actions and experimental activities (including transliteracy), an array of nonnormative characters, human and nonhuman, who the novella refers to as "riffraff" (p. 164), "disenfranchised things" (p. 148), or " $\approx\Delta\approx$ "⁸ (pp. 209 ff), emerge and co-control the plot. The production of radically innovative, queer imaginaries, settings and characters is central to *Gaudy Bauble*. It forms the basis of its queer avant-garde poetics (see Chapter Two). This hypothetical back blurb captures *Gaudy Bauble's* poetics in a short paragraph:

Gaudy Bauble stages a glittering world populated by Gilbert&George-like lesbians, GoldSeXUal StatuEttes, anti-drag kings, maverick detectives, a transgender army equipped with question-mark-shaped helmets, and pets who have "dyke written all over them" (p. 149). Everyone interferes with the plot. No one is in control of the plot. Multiple micro-agendas, revolts, protests, and actions intertwine like so many helices, converging into a compelling plot. Surprises happen as a matter of course: A *faux* research process produces actual results. A digital experiment goes viral. Hundreds of lipstick marks quicken a dying body. And the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize goes to whoever turns deadestwood into dynamost. *Gaudy Bauble* stages what happens when disenfranchised things are calling the shots. Riff-raff are running the show and they are making a difference.

I have reproduced *Gaudy Bauble's* [GB]⁹ opening scene (pp. 148-150) below. The scene illustrates how I have actioned transliteracy's particular constraint which stipulated that I

⁸ The symbol $\approx\Delta\approx$ (singular and plural) is based on a pink triangle (symbolising gay rights) and a waveform resembling wings. The latter is an allusion to gay U.S. poet Jack Spicer's quote that "[o]ne cannot, however, safely invent an angel" (1956/2008, p. 80). *Gaudy Bauble* develops Spicer's queer "angel" into agential entities, or $\approx\Delta\approx$ (2.0).

⁹ Further references to the novella in the thesis will be given as *GB*.

invest otherwise marginal actors with the capacity to influence the developing narrative (see 2.2). Marginal actors might include the tonal, rhythmic or graphic values of a linguistic sequence; the near homonyms formidable and Formica; a real-life horse print on my sweater; the lettering *On y va!* on my sweater (see Figs. 12 and vi); a fictional pet budgerigar, Tulep; the complementarity of a hoofed budgerigar and a winged horse; and a hound's-tooth pattern on a desk, for example (for detailed case studies, see 2.3-2.3.3; 3.3-3.3.3). There are no separate realms of practice and fiction in transliteracy. Transliteracy displaces the distinctions between my own experimental writing practice, and the characters' diverse actions in *GB*. Accordingly, the constraint is reflected in the subject matter of the novella's opening scene. Two marginal actors, Tulep, a pet bird, and Peggy, a winged horse printed on the human protagonist's sweater, dominate the narrative. Protagonist Gotterbarm has a hand in the action, but she is not in control.

I. TULEP

A formidable micro-horse sprang across a Formica[®] tabletop. Ah, it's Tulep. Tulep sprang across grassgreen Formica[®], grazing, apparently. Besides, a white plastic laptop stood on the tabletop. Someone was maltreating its keyboard. Trailblazing, apparently. Trailblazer Belà Gotterbarm was wearing a chequered *Beirendonck* skirt, worse-for-wear trainers and tennis socks. She was wearing her soft-cotton Pegasus print sweater. The Pegasus on Belà's sweater reared and raised her wings. Pink flashes and green graffiti on extra soft cotton manifested Pegasus energy. On the other hand, Tulep was posturing atop the Formica[®] tabletop like a formidable female stallion. The Pegasus on Belà's sweater was a winged horse, whereas Tulep was an ungulate budgerigar. Heh, Peggy! Tulep, heh. Raised pinions, Tulep was pawing Formica[®]. Was this territorial posturing? A mutual 'Piss Off'? Or a macho stand-off? Heh, Pegface! Tuleper, heh. But this was not a territorial stand-off. This was not *Highlander* (1986). This was a get-together of disenfranchised things. This was a faggoty social. A

working class knees-up. A cocky conspiracy? From Hoofed Winged Thing to Hoofed Winged Thing. From one Hoofed Winged Thing to another. From 'Chimera (genetics)' to 'Chimera (mythology)'. Peggy <3 Tulep. And Tulep <3 Peggy. They were giving each other ideas. And this was just the beginning.

Belà Gotterbarm wrote *Awangarda fikcja*. *Awkwardgarde* fiction, potentially trailblazing. In a 10th floor council flat on Harpur Street, WC1N, Belà's white plastic laptop stood atop the hound's-tooth Formica tabletop. Unaware of the faggoty social taking place under her nose, Belà was working on the script for a new 8-part television series, working title Querbird. Filming was due to get underway ASAP. "ASAP," director/producer Tracey B. Lulip had said. "Preferably yesterday." Belà had promised a tone-and-*milieu*-setting, intrigue-inciting pilot by tomorrow afternoon.

In terms of the writing process, hound's-tooth Formica and Belà's pet bird proved influential, rather than Peggy the Pegasus, say. Confronting the bird/hound's-tooth conundrum head-on, Belà invented a generic canary character. To Belà's mind, the canary was the optimal birdhound, or birddog. Etymologically, 'canary' derives from Latin *canis*, genitive: *canarius*; see canine (n.). Belà typed the word 'Canary'. Good. Querbird began like this: 'Canary'. Canaries as a species originate from the Canary Islands, or "*Insula Canaria*, literally 'Island of Dogs', so called because large dogs lived there". On the other hand, Tulep originated not from the Island of Dogs, but the Isle of Dogs in the East End of London. This, however, did not make Tulep a natural birddog. There was an excess of filly in her. A filly is a female foal. Also etymologically, the 'Dog' in the Isle of Dogs appears to be a corruption of a precedent 'Duck', as in the Isle of Ducks, or 'Dyke', as in the Isle of Super-Dykes. Tulep had dyke written all over her. Above filly, Tulep had dyke written all over her.

Belà's second draft replaced the Canary, the optimal birddog, with of all things a budgerigar. Deleting 'Canary', Belà typed 'Hoofed Budgerigar'. What? Why?! Tulep was not the optimal birddog! But this was the Pegasus off Belà's sweater putting her foot down. This was Peggy the Pegasus throwing her weight behind Tulep. From Hoofed Winged Thing to Hoofed Winged Thing. From one Hoofed Winged Thing to another. This was the recently formed H.W.T. (Hoofed Winged Things) alliance exerting its influence. This was the H.W.T. alliance winging its way into the Querbird

script. Was this a camp coup? A butch putsch? An attack on generic things? Mobilising working-class-knees-up resources, Peggy was as if electrified. Pink flashes surrounded her head. Green graffiti. Peggy was so energetic. As well as H.W.T. solidarity, Peggy embodied a let's-go mentality. An appetite to get going. The phrase '*On y va!*' ran towards the hem of Belà's sweater in metallic lettering. Peggy was the bye-bye-saying, never-to-be-seen-again type of migrant Pegasus. This was Peggy, the let's-get-the-hell-out-of-here Pegasus. This was *Aufnimmerwiederschen* Peggy. Peggy was raring to go and she was taking no prisoners. On her way out, Peggy walked all over the Querbird Canary. Peggy walked all over the generic Canary, paving the way for her Hoofed Winged Kin, Tulep.

This was bad news for the Querbird script. Bad news all round. After a promising start, Querbird was real-time derailing. Bye bye, generic Canary. Bye bye, optimal birddog. Belà Gotterbarm's second draft read like this:

'Querbird Pilot (Gotterbarm, 201X)

Hoofed Budgerigar Of The Isle Of Dogs.
Hoofed Budgerigar Off To Canary Wharf.
? Goes To The Dogs.'

When Belà looked up from her laptop, Tulep was gone. Tulep?! Tulep! The window stood slightly ajar. Bird corrupted by flighty Pegasus? 'Hoofed Budgerigar Off To The Isle Of Dogs'? Off to the Isle of Super-Dykes, an imagined stronghold. An imagined Fire Island in the East End of London. An insular Old Compton Street, or Hebden-Bridge-by-the-Thames. Belà Gotterbarm dropped what she was doing and went after Tulep. ... This was not quite a camp coup, nor a butch putsch. But it was a beginning (pp. 148-150).

.iii Autoethnographic reflections: a queer avant-garde?

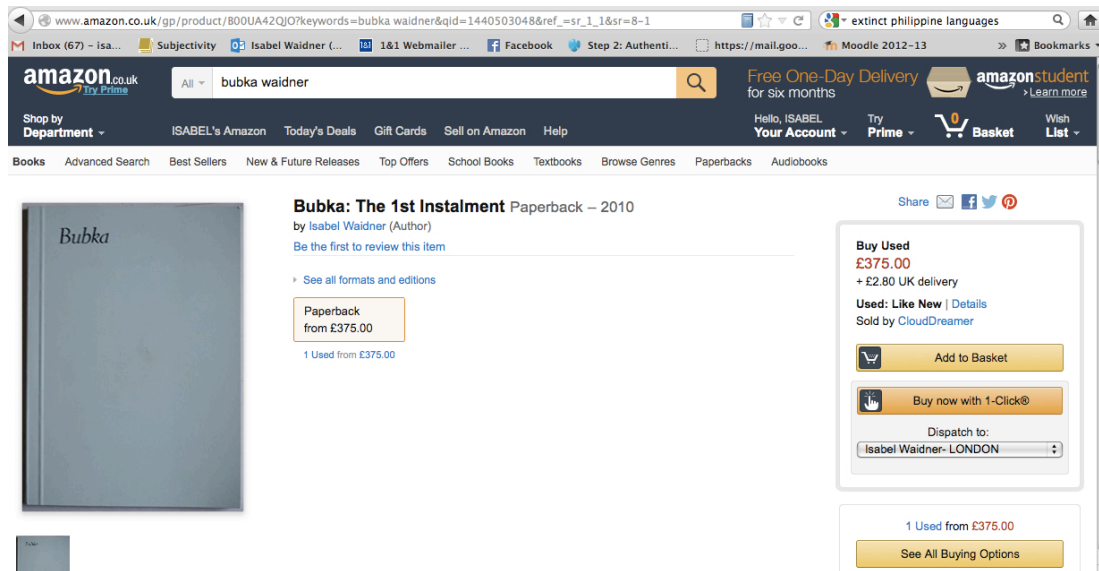


Fig. 1: Purchase my out-of-print novella *Bubka* on Amazon for £375¹⁰

I started this doctoral study as an already published experimental novelist. Published by the London-based independent press *8fold*, my novellas *Frantisek Flounders* (2011) and *Bubka* (2010) are now out-of-print (see Fig.1). Most recently, I contributed a piece of experimental fiction (Waidner, 2015a) to the *Dictionary of Lost Languages* that also includes work by Paul Bailey, Olivia Laing, Ali Smith, and Sarah Wood.¹¹ An excerpt from *Gaudy Bauble* (Waidner, 2015b) was published in the Arabic/English bilingual journal *Makhzin*¹² (Arsanios, Atterbury, & El-Raiss, 2015b). And an excerpt of my previous novella, *Bravo*,

¹⁰ <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Bubka-The-Instalment-Isabel-Waidner/dp/B00UA42QJO>, or download the free pdf <http://www.8fold.org/library.html> [accessed 1 April 2016]

¹¹ http://sarahwoodworld.com/projects_06.html [accessed 11 March 2016]

¹² <http://www.makhzin.org/issues/feminisms/gaudy-bauble> [accessed 11 March 2016]

*Parrot*¹³ (Waidner, 2015c), was published in *The Arrow Maker: Journal for Language & Experimentation* (which I co-edit with artist Ruth Höflich; see Conclusion).

My long-term practice has been shaped within a sociocultural context which I will term a 'queer avant-garde'. My contemporaries and collaborators have worked at the radical edge of performance art (U.K. performance artists Bird la Bird¹⁴ and David Hoyle¹⁵, for example), the queer arts (Rachel Anderson, Emma Hedditch, Charlotte Prodger, Irene Revell¹⁶, for example), radical theatre and avant-garde film (Mojisola Adebayo¹⁷, Campbell X¹⁸, Sarah Wood¹⁹, for example), critical theory (Sara Ahmed, Lisa Blackman, Matthew Fuller, Sarah Franklin, Tahani Nadim and Joanna Zylińska, for example), or the independent music industries (*Electrelane*, *Erase Errata*, *Lesbo Pig*, *Male Bonding*, and *Woolf*, for example).²⁰ Although many of these writers, artists and theorists

¹³ https://waidnerdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/isabelwaidner_am1.pdf [accessed 11 March 2016]

¹⁴ Bird la Bird is a UK femme/queer performance artist. Combining a working-class ethos regarding dressing up and unfiltered social commentary, she has been called an 'haute couture fishwife'. Most recently, she has been queering major public spaces such as the V&A and the Wallace Collection with her critiques of gender, sexuality, class and colonialism. See for example <http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/out-in-the-museum/a-well-a-everybodys-heard-about-the-bird-bird-bird-bird-b-birds-the-word> [accessed 4 April 2016]

¹⁵ David Hoyle is a UK queer performance 'artiste'. He is most widely known for his Divine David character, an "anti-drag queen" who combined "lacerating social commentary" with "breathhtaking instances of self-recrimination and even self-harm" (Wikipedia). Eventually taking his character to television, Hoyle produced two shows for the public service broadcaster Channel 4, *The Divine David Presents* (1998) and *The Divine David Heals* (2000). In 2000, Hoyle decided to bring an end to Divine David, performing a farewell show at Streatham Ice Arena entitled *The Divine David on Ice*. After his stint on national TV, David Hoyle has continued his longstanding performance series at the Royal Vauxhall Tavern, Soho Theatre and Chelsea Theatre, for example.

¹⁶ <http://www.electra-productions.com/> [accessed 4 April 2016]

¹⁷ <http://mojisolaadebayo.co.uk/> [accessed 4 April 2016]

¹⁸ <http://www.blackmanvision.com/campbell/> [accessed 4 April 2016]

¹⁹ <http://www.sarahwoodworld.com/> [accessed 4 April 2016]

²⁰ I have an early background as a musician, touring and releasing several records, lastly with the band *Klang* on U.K. independent labels *Blast First* (2004) and *Rough Trade* (2003). See <http://www.blastfirstpetite.com/klangnosoundisheard.html> [accessed 4 April 2016]

have worked with text, with the exception of cultural theorist Matthew Fuller²¹ and novelist Ali Smith, experimental novelists were underrepresented in the queer avant-garde context within which I was writing (see also .vii; Conclusion).

My concept of a queer avant-garde includes an archive of diverse forms of literature that have inspired my long-term writing practice. Arguably, my practice has been a product of what science studies scholar and gender theorist Sarah Franklin has called 'interliteracy' (2013). Interliteracy is “[t]he disciplined reading across disciplines” (p. 8), and the concept provided the starting point for the writing methodology transliteracy which I have developed as part of the thesis. In 2008, I participated in a documentary series, *The Librarians*²², commissioned and funded by *Grizedale Arts Foundation*. The directors Maria Benjamin and Ruth Höflich invited me and other writers and artists to discuss our personal ‘libraries’, or, in my case, my bookshelves.²³ Canonical avant-garde literature by Samuel Beckett, Thomas Bernhard, Jorge Luis Borges, Christine Brooke-Rose, Brigid Brophy, Julio Cortázar, Eugene Ionesco, B.S. Johnson, Franz Kafka, Ann Quin, Raymond Roussel, and Stefan Themerson, for example, was interspersed with LGTBQI+ classics such as Audre Lorde's *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982/2001), Valerie Mason-John's *Brown Girl in the Ring* (1999), and Sarah Schulman's *After Delores* (1988/1990); independent cult and artists' publications such as *LTTR: Lesbians To The Rescue* (2002-2006)²⁴, and *BTF* (Butch Tops Fuck

²¹ For Fuller's experimental novel *Elephant & Castle* (2011) see <http://www.spc.org/fuller/fiction/help-and-advice/> [accessed 4 April 2016]

²² <http://toadball.tv/works/the.librarians> [accessed 2 April 2016]

²³ Prior to gaining access to the British Library as a published novelist, I had been educating myself in Camden Council's public libraries (ca. 2000-2010). For example, Swiss Cottage Central Library housed an extensive collection of continental philosophy and avant-garde literature.

²⁴ The 5 issues of *LTTR* journal were fully digitised in 2015: <http://www.lttr.org/> [accessed 2 April 2016]

Anything) (2004)²⁵, and an independent journal I co-edited, produced and published with sociologist Emma Jackson, *The High Horse* (2004-2007)²⁶; 20th century philosophy including Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger; and works from cultural studies, feminist science studies, and queer studies by Sara Ahmed, Judith Butler, Sarah Franklin, Jack Halberstam, and Donna Haraway, for example. The archive reflected my personal situatedness at the peripheries and intersections of academia, art, music and diverse LGBTQI+ communities, and a long-term commitment to the subversive potential of canonical avant-garde literature. The documentary's director commented on what she considered an unorthodox and hotchpotch approach to categorisation on my shelves. She contrasted my ordering system with fellow *Librarian* Tom McCarthy's more traditionally taxonomised book collection. ("Ok, over here, there's poetry" (McCarthy in *The Librarians*, 2008).) Not situated within any particular academic discipline myself, I argued that my investment in diverse forms of literature and theory did not differ, for example in relation to their alleged relation to reality, facticity or 'truth'. In terms of my practice, I did not discriminate between *Das Schloss* (Kafka, 1926), the biology textbook, *Female Masculinities* (Halberstam, 2000), and Karel Capek's science fiction play *R.U.R.* (1923/1975), for example. They all fed into my fictions in equal measure. For example, the narrative structure of my short story *Abel, Shop Assistant* (2005) was based on Heidegger's spiral of

²⁵ *BTEA* was an anonymous homo sex rag.

²⁶ I started to pursue my long-term commitment to writing more seriously in 2003. This included founding and co-editing the independent journal *The High Horse* (2004-2007) with Emma Jackson. We staged conversations between writers, artists and academics, and this developed my interest in exploring crossovers, intersections and productive tensions across the humanities and experimental writing, which I have subsequently pursued towards doctoral study.

<http://www.oogaboogastore.com/shop/books/detail/HighHorse.html> [accessed 2 April 2016]

the becoming spirit depicted in *Schelling's Abhandlung über das Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit* (1936). Walter Benjamin's essay *The Task of The Translator* (1921) inspired my short story *Ursel Translator* (2006).

Retrospectively, I argue that the way that I read, evaluated and employed these diverse forms of literature in my writing practice transgressed their intentions and interventions within their respective disciplines, hence their disciplinary containment. Irrespective of their alleged purchase on reality, facticity, or truth, my working relationship with these various literatures was defined by what they might *do*, or what I might do with them in my fictions.

Known for his development of culture and literature as historically specific concepts, the literary theorist Raymond Williams (1921-1988) exposed the naturalised divisions between various forms of knowledge as constructed and historically contingent. In *Marxism and Literature*, Williams argued that "the crippling categorizations and dichotomies between 'fact' and 'fiction', or of 'discursive' and 'imaginative' or 'referential' and 'emotive', stand regularly not only between works and readers, *but between writers and works, at a still active and shaping stage*" (Williams, 1977, p. 146, my emphasis). Further, "the really severe limitation is the line drawn between [varying forms of literature] and other 'non-literary' forms of fiction" (ibid). Williams exposed the "drawing and re-drawing of all the lines between 'philosophical' or 'descriptive' or 'didactic' or 'instructional' writing, as well as what would now be called 'imaginative' or 'dramatic' or 'fictional' or 'personal' writing and experience" as the means of a process of secularization and rationalization of a wide area of experience in capitalism (p. 147). These limitation, lines and processes, Williams argued, suppress what he called the multiplicity of writing. Developing the

transdisciplinary²⁷ orientation of my long-term practice, transliteracy and *GB* make some headway towards unsuppressing the multiplicity of writing. The challenging and subverting of disciplinary distinctions, as well as distinctions between fact and fiction, is central to a queer avant-garde poetics and writing methodology, and I will develop this claim in subsequent chapters.

One of the contestations of the thesis is that Raymond Williams's interdisciplinary work has not shaped experimental writing practices, but migrated away from literature into the radically interdisciplinary, or antidisiplinary, field of British cultural studies. The transdisciplinary approaches from within science and technology studies through which I have developed my practice often incorporate perspectives from cultural studies (Haraway, 1988/1991; Mayberry et al., 2001; Blackman, 2014, for example). Developing an avant-garde writing practice more centrally within cultural studies might prove productive in future research.

.iv Mobilising estrangement as experimental writing practice: *Frantisek Flounders* (Waidner, 2011)

Negotiating the perceived density or physical presence of the English language has been of central importance to my long-term writing practice. Writing in English as a native German speaker, I have experimented with the productive tensions of what felt like working with a noncompliant substance. Contrary to more conventional writing practices, I did not enact language as a transparent, disembodied medium and signifying

²⁷ In contrast to interdisciplinarity which denotes a combining of disciplines based on their presumed autonomy (see 1.4.4), I will use the term transdisciplinarity to denote my practice which was not shaped within a particular disciplinary context to begin with.

function. Language did not facilitate the proverbial 'flow', i.e. unmediated expression of content. In order to inject agency into what to a large extent exceeded my control, I accentuated rhythmic patterns, tonally or graphically 'preferable' arrangements of letters and words, or affinities between English and German. I began mobilising the capacities of language to engender unexpected narrative content. For example, I might have allowed an unlikely homonymic pairing or an emergent rhythmic pattern to divert a predictable narrative progression.

My writing method recruited a position of relative powerlessness, where the writer (I) had no more control over the plot than language itself, for example. This principle was also reflected in my early fictions' respective content (Waidner, 2010, 2011, 2015c). Their narratives were not preplanned or plotted, and *Gaudy Bauble's* extends this experimental approach.²⁸ But neither were they entirely arbitrary. Just like a powerful other, English, 'co-controlled' my writing process, someone or something else tended to co-control my protagonists. Strange and nonhuman characters typically interfered with the protagonists' often ill-defined projects and agendas. In *Frantisek Flounders* (2011), some sort of bio-colossus, the eponymous flounder (Fig. 2), lands in protagonist Frantisek's lap, for example (p.1). In its unspecified but prominent physicality²⁹, the flounder dictates the plot, whereas protagonist Frantisek flounders, perhaps. In *Bravo, Parrot* (2015c), a large wooden structure comes to star in an amateur theatre production (see .v). It is not

²⁸ In many conventional and also experimental fictions, the protagonists' conscious or subconscious motivations structure the plot. Likewise, the author's conscious or subconscious motivations shape the text during the writing process. On the contrary, my early fictions and practice defied normative conceptions of intentionality, motivation, authorship, causality and plot structure (and voluntarist forms of subjectivity underlying these concepts).

²⁹ The narrative states that "[t]he relevant character did not resemble a flounder, but that was its name and where else to start" (Waidner, 2011, p. 2).

coincidental that Frantisek's flounder (Fig. 2) resembles the metaphor that, following Smithson, I will use to describe 'English' in my writing practice: a physically prominent, domineering and highly agential heap (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2: The eponymous flounder (right) in Frantisek Flounders (Waidner, 2011, p. 40)

Arguably, I enacted the real-life power relations that I experienced as a gender nonconforming, EU migrant (if you will) and nonnative English speaker in my early fictions. Despite their seemingly surrealist, and to many readers unfamiliar, content and aesthetic, they reflected the situated context within which I was writing more accurately than any works of mainstream literature. Transliteracy develops the relationality and inseparability of real-life context, writing practice and fictional content by displacing distinctions between the 'material' realm (within which I practice) and the realm of signification entirely. I have developed this orientation as the genre agential realist fiction which is in formation in *Gaudy Bauble* (see Chapter Three and Conclusion).

.v Does form obscure content? *Bravo, Parrot* (Waidner, 2015c)

This section stages some of the tensions that emerged in my work prior to starting this doctoral thesis and that shaped this practice-led space of enquiry. Arguably, my early novellas *Frantisek Flounders* and *Bravo, Parrot* evoke for my readership (artists, academics, musicians, and members of the LGBTQI+ communities) some of what it might mean to write in a second language (and more widely, to exist in a marginal context): intrigue, estrangement, overstimulation, distraction, fascination, guess-work, labour, more labour, lack of control, and the likelihood of semantic blind spots. In *Frantisek Flounders* (2011), for example, material (or extra-referential) and semiotic (referential) modalities of language appeared to compete for attention. In her response to my novella the media scholar Lisa Blackman (2011) writes: “Often as a reader, it is the sound of the words, their musicality, which arrests attention. The shock of carefully crafted sentences, which in the idiosyncratic combination of words, semantics and grammar, create something anew; something that requires contemplation and savouring, before one can return [to the narrative] (final paragraph).”³⁰ Much like a heap obscuring the view (see Figs. 2 and 3), or a foreign accent, the material language seemed to get in the way of signification. Commenting on Smithson's *A Heap of Language* (1966) (Fig. 3), literary scholar Richard Sieburth (1999) alluded to a similar split between language as substance, or 'thing', and as referential function. Sieburth wrote that "first, you 'look at it' as a 'thing', then you 'read it' as 'language'".³¹ In Chapter One I will argue that contemporary conceptual

³⁰ Blackman was invited to respond to *Frantisek Flounders* at the *8fold* press's launch event in 2011. The full text can be found here https://waidnerdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/blackmans_response.pdf [accessed 11 March 2016]

³¹ <http://www.robertsmithson.com/essays/heap.html> [accessed 11 March 2016]

writing strategies consolidate a genealogy of avant-garde literatures which have enacted language as a material, physical event, and which have enacted this material event as 'other', or prior, to signification (1.2). Co-editor (with Kenneth Goldsmith) of the genre-defining anthology *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* Craig Dworkin (2010) writes, quoting Smithson: “my sense of language is that it is matter and *not* ideas” (p. xxxvi, my emphasis).

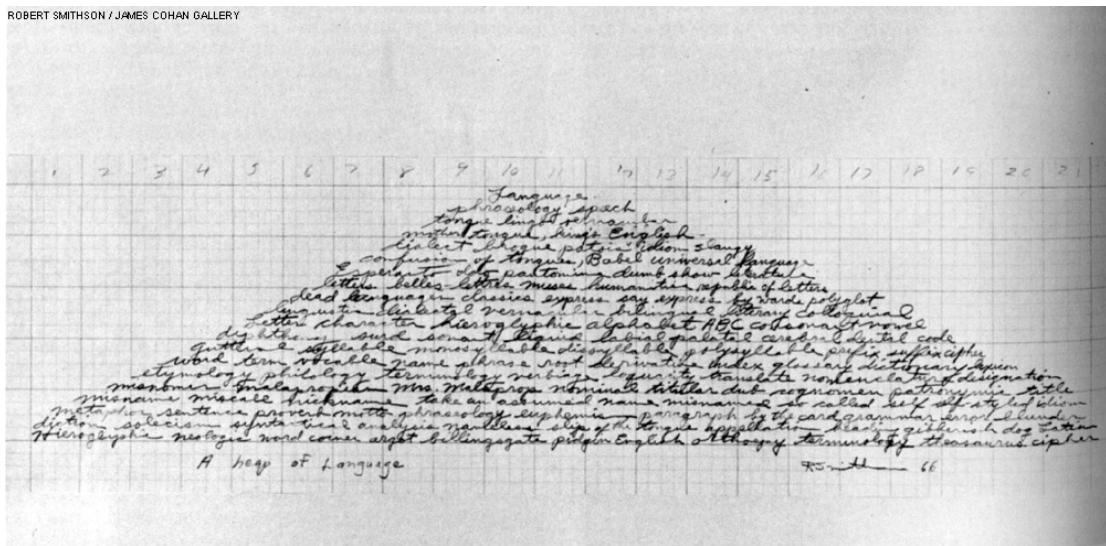


Fig. 3: A Heap of Language (Robert Smithson, 1966, pencil drawing)

In contrast, my intention was not to obscure or deconstruct narrative content by enacting language as a material event. My intention was to recruit my inevitably estranged relations to language into my project to engender nonnormative narratives. Whilst it might have been the case that the material, thing-like capacities of language got in the way of 'the' narrative, I had been recruiting the same capacities to engender *other*, less predictable narratives.

With hindsight, I had begun to enact a basic performative³² relationship between language as thing and language as medium in my practice. In the following excerpt from *Bravo, Parrot* (Waidner, 2015c), a novella I wrote between 2010 and 2012, I explored the ambiguity of the signifier getting in the way of the regular narrative while simultaneously effecting another narrative. A written comment (the mathematical symbol for an omission) on a proposal for a stage design is taken to be part of that stage design and actualised as part of the physical stage set. It is the materiality of the signifier (a struck-through V written onto the proposal in grey felt-pen) that shapes the narrative, rather than the signifier's intended denotation ('omission').

From BRAVO, PARROT

The circumvention of the indefatigable planet was under the circumstances no straightforward matter. *Es ging kein Weg dran vorbei*, the sun was shining. Several months into the new polar day, planetary plenty, and though lustre lacked selfsame episodically you would have to go out of your way to ignore the unwaning planet cleaving to its celestial prominence.

Antarctic scenography required a representation of permafrost and eternal day so as to be recognisable. Noncommittal with regard to the latter, the authorities returned the proposal with a struck-through capital V. A struck-through capital V is the sign for an omission. It symbolises an absence. A grey felt-penned veto marked the improbable blank above the linear graph representing the Antarctic ice sheet. As a consequence, a large wooden structure, grey lacquered, a struck-through capital V, a totem erect in the snowscape, a cloven maypole, or a tandem gallows-tree had come to replace the sun whom all was supposed to revolve around.

³² I have enacted the presumption that representations and entities represented are relational, rather than entirely independent from each other. See Chapter Two (p. 75, footnote 82) for a more comprehensive definition of the concept of performativity and its various genealogies. Throughout the thesis I will develop the affordances of performativity for avant-garde writing practices and transliteracy.

A life-size snowscape had been installed in the local gymnasium, including a ten foot wooden version of the grey felt-penned veto. The symbol of absence, a struck-through capital V, manifested in *faux*-Antarctica in life-size proportions. Dangerously, it resembled a gallows-tree. Why hadn't the faulty proposal been rejected at the conceptual stage?! Why had the crappy design been realised? Too late. Already an amateur theatre troupe populated the snowy stage set, waiting for action (Waidner, 2015c, pp. 53-54).³³

These tensions and limitations informed my initial research questions which included: How might I develop a writing method that mobilises the materiality of language so as to produce, rather than obscure, innovative content and subject matter? How might I develop my practice beyond the antagonistic relationship of 'language as thing' and 'language as medium'? Is it necessarily the case that deviations from the linguistic norm render works of literature unreadable (Rasula and McCaffery, 1998, p. x)? Is there no such thing as an avant-garde pageturner?³⁴

³³ https://waidnerdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/isabelwaidner_aml.pdf [accessed 2 May 2016]

³⁴ During this research I discovered poetics that have challenged and extended the conventional meaning of 'meaning' beyond referential or narrative content. Situated largely within avant-garde poetry rather than fiction, these poetics incorporated the non-referential, extra-referential, affective, graphic and phonetic capacities of language as well as its more traditional, referential aspects into their concept of meaning (Bernstein, 1987/1992; Forrest-Thompson, 1978, example). In his influential essay *Artifice of Absorption* (1987/1992), language poet Charles Bernstein contrasts the concept of 'transparency' (the feeling of 'unmediated' access to referential content) with the concept of absorption (the capturing and holding of a reader's attention). According to Bernstein, producing the feeling of unmediated access to the narrative is not the only way of capturing and keeping a reader's attention. Material or poetic strategies might achieve a similarly "spellbinding, mesmerizing, hypnotic" (p. 29) effect. While my view on what might constitute a pageturner developed in the context of these debates, they offered little in terms of how to recruit the materiality of language to produce specifically nonnormative content. (In 3.3.2 I discuss a scene from *GB* that explores various forms of absorption in its subject matter.)

.vi Linguistic experimentation and innovative content: a split genealogy?

One of this thesis's findings is that, after postmodernism, the genealogy of avant-garde fictions that "went so far beyond prevailing linguistic standards that they were widely considered "unreadable"" (McCaffery & Rasula, 1998, back cover) has largely dried up. Fictions that have experimented with linguistic deviance *and* deviant content have been marginalised since the rise of conceptual writing. Arguably, conceptual writing has shaped experimental writing practices beyond the field of poetry where it first emerged (see Chapter One). A recent special issue, *Experimental Writing* (Mitchell, 2015), in the journal *Contemporary Women's Writing* features articles on contemporary U.S. art writer Chris Kraus, a diverse range of U.K. poets (Holly Pester, Mendoza and Sophie Robinson), multi-lingual Canadian poet and conceptual writer Erin Moure, and an interview with novelist Ali Smith. Smith is the only novelist, and this ratio is reflected in other contemporary anthologies of experimental writing (Bray et al. (2012); Dworkin & Goldsmith (2010); Bergvall et al. (2012), for example).

In the U.S., Canada and the U.K., linguistic or formal experimentation, I argue, is currently most likely to happen in experimental poetry and the expanding field of conceptual writing. This includes texts that challenge the distinction between poetry and prose writing (Conrad, 2015, 2016; Hilson, 2015; Jaeger, 2015; Robinson, 2012, for example; also McCaffery, 1980/2002; Spicer, 1956/2008, for precedent examples; see Conclusion). At their most nuanced, these texts are innovative in form and also in content. On the other hand, nonmainstream fictions and other novel-length prose texts tend to foreground innovative narrative. For example, the queer U.S. poet Eileen Myles's *A Poet's Novel* (2013), the Canadian *Arsenal Pulp* press's queer catalogue

(transgender writer Ivan E. Coyote's *Close To Spiderman* (2000), for example), Vanessa Place's L.A.-based *Les Figues Press*'s prose publications (Colin Winnette's *Coyote* (2014), for example), or the U.S. publisher *Fiction Collective 2*'s largely heteronormative output (1974-), might offer imaginative narratives, but they are not linguistically exploratory or experimental. *FC2*'s stand-out publication is Austrian emigrant Marianne Hauser's queer avant-garde novel *The Talking Room* (1976). Proliferating works of art writing and artists' novels such as Maria Fusco's *The Mechanical Cupola* (2010), Chris Kraus's *I Love Dick* (1997/2016), Katrina Palmer's *The Dark Object* (2010), Maija Timonen's *The Measure of Reality* (2015), Jacob Wren's *Polyamorous Love Song* (2014), or the U.K. publisher *Bookworks*' *Semina Series* might be, but are not necessarily linguistically, formally nor narratively particularly experimental.

Recent fictions that are both, linguistically *and* narratively explorative include *Goldsmiths Prize* winners Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* (2014) and Eimear McBride's *A Girl is a Half-formed Thing* (2013); *Dalkey Archive Press*'s publications which are predominately reissues of canonical avant-garde novels and translations; U.K. publisher *Reality Street*'s *Narrative Series*; Matthew Fuller's *Elephant & Castle* (2011); Gail Scott's *The Obituary* (2012); and Renee Gladman's *Ravicka* series (2010, 2011, 2013), for example. The recent proliferation of U.K. based, independent online and print journals and book presses which actively seek to publish experimental forms of writing (for example, 3:am, The Happy Hypocrite, minor literature[s], Test Centre, and The Arrow Maker) is likely to diversify future fictions.

Arguably, the genealogical split between formal experimentation (conceptual writing, experimental poetry) on the one hand, and innovative narrative (novels and fictions that might fictionalise marginal subject positions) on the other, is directly related

to the ongoing deficiency of queer avant-garde literature. To give a precedent example of the split, the formally groundbreaking language poets³⁵ tended to be contrasted with the gay, lesbian and working class writers of *New Narrative*.³⁶ The lack of a significant queer avant-garde is specific to literature. I have already argued that my practice was shaped within diverse and thriving queer avant-garde cultures across contemporary arts, performance arts, theatre and film (.iii). Queer avant-garde novelists are conspicuously absent from this context. Prior to starting the thesis, the work that resonated most with my own tended to originate in other disciplines. For example, Mojisola Adebayo's *Plays One* (2011) retains avant-garde sensibilities while simultaneously dealing with questions of race, power and sexuality. Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver from the lesbian performance group *Split Britches*³⁷ (see also 2.2.3; Conclusion; and *Chapter 10. THE GOLDSEXUAL STATUETTE*, pp. 182-185) have been "romping about in the avant-garde", to quote from their play *Belle Retrieve* (Bourne, Shaw, Shaw, & Weaver, 1991/1996, p. 179), since the 1980s, and they are still producing radically experimental work today.³⁸ In contrast to the thriving fields of avant-garde performance art, film, and dance, for example,

³⁵ L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry or language writing is an avant-garde poetry movement that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the U.S. (see 1.2).

³⁶ *New Narrative* is a group of experimental writers founded in the 1970s in San Francisco, who aimed to "elaborate narration on as many planes as [they] could" (Glück, 2004/2010, p. 28; also Burger et al., 2004/2010). For *Narrativity*, an online publication co-edited by Robert Glück, Gail Scott, Mary Burger and Camille Roy, see <https://www.sfsu.edu/~newlit/narrativity/home.html> [accessed 1 April 2016] In a recent issue of U.S. publisher Semiotext(e)'s annual journal *Animal Shelter* (El Kholti & Dewhurst (ed.)), Chris Kraus suggested that *New Narrative* seemed to be coming round again (p. 2). Also, the collection *Anarchic sexual desires of plain unmarried schoolteachers* (McCormack, 2015) includes recent engagements with *New Narrative* by present-day artists, who "shared a sensibility with the work produced at the time" (p. 5).

³⁷ <https://splitbritches.wordpress.com/> [accessed 1 April 2016]

³⁸ Alongside U.K. based queer performance artists already mentioned above (.iii; also Conclusion), *Split Britches* are a major influence on my work. As well as 'appearing' in *Gaudy Bauble's Chapter 10. THE GOLDSEXUAL STATUETTE*, the quote referenced above constitutes one of the novella's epitaphs (p. 145).

historically, linguistically or formally explorative fiction rarely turned queer. Exceptions include Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936/2007), Brigid Brophy's *In Transit* (1969/2002), William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* (1959/2015), Maureen Duffy's *The Microcosm* (1966/1989), Renee Gladman's *Ravickian Series* (2010, 2011, 2013), Jovette Marchessault's *Lesbian Tryptich* (1975), Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus* (1914/2013), Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* (2014), and Monique Wittig's *Les Guérillères* (1969/1985), for example.³⁹ As a result of this research, I have positioned my work increasingly alongside queer works emerging within experimental poetry, and which partially displace the distinction between fiction and poetry. Examples include CA Conrad's prose texts (2015; 2016); Sophie Robinson's unpublished novella *SHE!* (2012); and the work included in the U.K. anthology *Gender is a Glitter* (Crewe & Mayer, 2014) (see Conclusion).

.vii Experimentation and criticality

I will conclude the Introduction with some general reflections on the epithet experimental in literature. 'Experimental' has been a vexed and slippery term, designating interchangeably the literary avant-garde; literary innovation; literary attempt; or literary failure. Periodically, the term has been rejected by writers including

³⁹ The argument has been made that the avant-garde and feminist projects share an opposition to established forms and forces, and the pursuit to modify or overturn existing modes of representation and to effect radical change (Friedman & Fuchs, 1989). Despite these seemingly overlapping objectives, these links have not been mined for their creative and critical potential (see also Mitchell, 2015; Friedman & Fuchs, 1989; Spahr & Young, 2005, for example). My aim is not to add to the proliferating feminist, queer and postcolonial critiques of the avant-garde and its post-identity politics. Rather, I have incorporated and enacted in my practice critiques of normative paradigms and epistemologies that the thesis shows are reproduced within many canonical avant-garde writing strategies, and that underpin normative subjectivities and the reproduction of sex and gender inequalities (see Chapters One and Two).

B.S. Johnson who wrote that "[e]xperimental' to most reviewers is almost always a synonym for 'unsuccessful'. I object to the word experimental being applied to my own work" (1973, p. 19). Kathy Acker argued that "the word 'experimental' has been used to hide the political radicalness of some writers" (Acker & Friedman, 1989, p. 21), and that "[society] is marginalizing the experimental and that's why I hate the word 'experimental'" (ibid). More recently, a trend has emerged in literature toward "salvaging the term experimental, rescuing it from the contexts where it is a term of dismissal and condescension, and reinvigorating its connotations of edginess, renovation and aesthetic adventure" (Bray et al., 2012, p. 3). Arguably, the projects to diversify experimental writing, and specifically, to "revivify the scholarship around women's experimental writing" (Mitchell, 2015, p. 13), have been gaining momentum, and I align the thesis with these projects.

In the *Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*, the co-editors Bray et al. use the modifier 'experimental' "more or less interchangeably with 'avant-garde'; and sometimes 'innovative'" (2012, p. 1). They acknowledge there are important differences, especially between avant-gardism's connotation of military and political radicalism, and experimentalism's connotation of scientificity. I argue that, typically, literary scholars and practitioners evoke or enlist literary experimentation's relation to scientific experimentation without any elaboration of what this relation might look like, nor any qualification of what scientific experimentation might actually mean. For example, Bray et al. vaguely "suggest that 'experiment' *nods* to science and, by extension, ideas of newness, trial, discovery, and progress" (2012, p. 1–2) (Mitchell, 2015, p. 3, my emphasis). Similarly, U.S. poet Ron Silliman in his *experimental writing* blogspot⁴⁰ states

⁴⁰ <http://2015experimentalwriting.blogspot.co.uk/> [accessed 16th March 2016]

that "[h]istorically, the term suggests a poetry written as though through a regime of investigation" (2015, first paragraph). Some common but normative presumptions within literature are that scientific experiments are "epistemological tools that verify or test a pre-existing hypothesis" (*Biography and Experimentation*, conference abstract, Goldsmiths UoL, English Department, May 2015)⁴¹; that scientific experimentation occurs in a sociocultural vacuum and that science and literature are "two mutually isolated domains of research [...] that might not have had any reason to interact" (Bök, 2008, p. 230); or that cultural, discursive and fictional constructs are ontologically fundamentally distinct to the 'natural' world (Brooke-Rose, 1991; Waugh, 1984; McHale, 1987, 2012). The thesis argues that these presumptions have shaped diverse forms of avant-garde literature and writing strategies, for example conceptual writing (Chapter One) and postmodernist experimental fictions (Chapter Three). Important to my argument is the contention that avant-garde writing practices uncritically reproduce normative versions of scientific experimentation, implicitly and explicitly (see Chapter One).

The thesis offers an explicit and critical (rather than complicit and implicit, see Chapters One and Three) engagement with the term 'experimental' and its scientific and interdisciplinary connotations, drawing out the implications and affordances for creative writing strategies, and exploring these in my practice-led method. Specifically, transliteracy is based on criticality towards mainstream literature *and* the mainstream sciences, and this is reflected in the debates I engage with in the thesis: on the one hand, avant-garde writing practices; and on the other, interdisciplinary critiques of mainstream approaches to experimentation in the sciences from within STS.

⁴¹ <http://www.gold.ac.uk/calendar/?id=8402> [accessed 16th March 2016]

.viii Map of chapters

Chapter One represents an explicit engagement with conceptual writing. Specifically, I discuss the Canadian poet Christian Bök's *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing) as a case study and example of conceptual writing. The aim is to illustrate what is at stake in my development of transliteracy as a queer avant-garde method for writing *Gaudy Bauble*. The chapter explores what the problems and possibilities are when conceptual writing strategies and practices are refracted through wider interdisciplinary debates regarding experimentation, practice, subjectivity, agency, materiality and meaning. The key argument is that conceptual writing strategies reproduce historical epistemologies (including positivism and relativism), and normative subject and object positions (including the potent unmarked subject position that is directly linked to epistemological and social power (Haraway, 1988/1991, 1997, for example)). I argue that these epistemologies, subject and object positions appear to derive directly from the mainstream sciences. What does the reproduction of these normative structures afford in the disciplinary context of contemporary avant-garde literature? What were the conditions of emergence that shaped conceptual writing strategies? Chapter One begins to develop an argument for engaging more performative approaches to experimentation in view of my aim to develop a queer avant-garde writing practice.

Chapter Two develops transliteracy as a queer avant-garde method for writing *Gaudy Bauble*. The chapter foregrounds a case study and analysis of *Gaudy Bauble's Chapter 13. ICY PET* (pp. 191-196). *Chapter 13* enacts the emergence of one of *Gaudy Bauble's* characters, the eponymous Icy Pet. Working across writing method and content, I have distributed agency across networks of ontologically diverse actors, fictional and real,

material and semiotic, human and nonhuman, and transformed them through transliteracy. As a product of diverse experimental practices (including transliteracy and my protagonists' actions), the Icy Pet defies categorisation. I will argue that she is simultaneously subjective *and* objective, factual *and* fictional, material *and* semiotic, and real *and* surreal, and, on that basis, nonnormative. Nonnormativity forms the basis for the queer avant-garde poetics I have developed in *Gaudy Bauble*.

Chapter Three situates *Gaudy Bauble* as a development of postmodernist experimental fictions, specifically Brigid Brophy's queer avant-garde novel *In Transit* (1969/2002). Shaped by their orientation towards antirealism, I argue that postmodernist fictions have tended to enact the dichotomy between language as material event and referential function (see .v, also 1.2) as the correlative dichotomies between the real world and the imaginary realm of fiction; and also between nature (physiological sex, for example) and social constructions (gender, for example) (3.1). The chapter develops the genre agential realist fiction which is in formation in *Gaudy Bauble* (3.4; also Conclusion). Agential realist fiction displaces the postmodernist dichotomies that the chapter identifies, and subverts traditional literary terms such as realism and antirealism. Further, Chapter Three situates agential realist fiction in the context of contemporary forms of LGBTQI+ activism and experiences. A case study of *Gaudy Bauble's Chapter 15. PAINLEVÉ HYPERCAMP & AXOIOTTL* (3.3-3.3.3) develops the way in which I have enacted a proliferation of radically nonconforming sexes and genders in the novella, and which is central to its queer avant-garde poetics.

Gaudy Bauble will be presented in the second part of the thesis.

Chapter One

A Transdisciplinary Analysis of Conceptual Writing and Christian Bök's *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing)

1.0 Introduction to Chapter One

This chapter is an engagement with conceptual writing. Specifically, it discusses the Canadian poet Christian Bök's *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing) as a case study and example of conceptual writing so as to illustrate what is at stake in my development of transliteracy as a queer avant-garde method for writing *Gaudy Bauble*. The chapter explores what the problems and possibilities are when conceptual writing strategies and practices are refracted through wider interdisciplinary debates regarding experimentation, practice, subjectivity, agency, materiality and meaning. As part of the thesis, I have situated my practice more explicitly within contemporary avant-garde writing strategies specifically conceptual writing. Transliteracy and *Gaudy Bauble* were shaped in response to the analyses in this chapter and Chapter Three.

Conceptual writing encompasses a diverse range of literary forms in which a concept is seen to predetermine the writing process. All decisions are made beforehand and the execution of the work becomes a "perfunctory affair" in conceptual writing (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 108). Examples include the algorithm-generated texts of the Flarf

collective⁴², whose email listserv linked members might google-search a circulated phrase and mine the results for poetic content (for example, Sharon Mesmer's *Annoying Diabetic Bitch* (2008)). Gay avant-garde poet David Melnick's homophonic translation⁴³ of Homer's *Iliad*, *Men In Aida* (1983/2015) is part of an earlier genealogy of constraint-based, procedural or rule-governed methodologies, now subsumed into conceptual writing. Christian Bök's *Eunoia* (2001a) is an Oulipian univocal lipogram⁴⁴, in which the chapters are composed of words with one of the vowels respectively. Figurehead Kenneth Goldsmith's works appropriate or plagiarise already existing language material into a poetic context. For example, *The Weather* (2005) is an exact transcript of a year's worth of weather reports on New York radio station WIIN. These literatures share a commitment to substituting "familiar strategies of authorial control" (Dworkin, 2010, p. xliii) for impersonal procedure. The chapter situates conceptual writing practices within the genealogical context within which they emerged (1.2). Despite borrowing the name and orientation from the conceptual art movement that emerged in the 1960s, I argue that conceptual writing practices were shaped in response to precedent avant-garde literature (specifically language writing⁴⁵), and in opposition to mainstream approaches to authorship, specifically lyrical expression (the idea of an author expressing a pre-

⁴² Flarf is an avant-garde poetry movement (2000s onwards). For a brief history and examples see Magee, Michael et al. (2003) *The Flarf Files* <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/bernstein/syllabi/readings/flarf.html> [accessed 24 March 2016]

⁴³ Melnick's homophonic translation turns the Greek original into a similar sounding (near-homophonic) text in English. Rather than preserving the original meaning of the Greek, Melnick elevates the *Iliad*'s homoerotic content.

⁴⁴ A lipogram is a constraint-based text in which a particular letter is avoided. The longest lipogram in existence is Oulipo member Georges Perec's novel *La Disparition* (1969). Translated as *A Void* by Gilbert Adair in 1995, it does not contain the letter E.

⁴⁵ L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry or language writing is an avant-garde poetry movement that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the U.S. (see also vi; 1.2).

existing inner self). The key argument of the chapter is that, refracted through interdisciplinary perspectives of experimentation, conceptual writing strategies inadvertently reproduce historical epistemologies (including positivism and relativism) that appear to derive directly from the mainstream sciences. These epistemologies are based on the presumption that experimentation in the sciences is a theory-driven (conceptual?) activity, a derivative test of an existing hypothesis (whose execution might be considered a perfunctory affair). Historical epistemologies are connected to sociocultural and economic power, extreme resistance to criticality, and the production of extremely normative and exclusive subject and object positions (including what I will term the subject-of-no-subjectivity (1.3; 1.4.2), and the passive, inert object of scientific positivism (1.4.3)). Discussing conceptual writing strategies in general (1.2 and 1.3), and Christian Bök's *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing) in more detail (1.4-1.4.4), the chapter explores what the enactment of normative epistemologies from the sciences might mean and afford in the disciplinary context of contemporary avant-garde literature.

Transliteracy shares with conceptual writing an orientation towards working with language as a material, physical 'other' or event; towards exploring modes of authorship beyond subjective expression; and towards interdisciplinarity. However, conceptual writing strategies reproduce some of the normative, representational⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Many scholars have argued that the diverse dichotomies that the thesis argues have shaped experimental writing practices are correlates of 'representationalism'. Representationalism is the notion that representations are independent from entities represented (Barad, 2003, 2007; Hacking, 1983; Haraway, 1997; Latour, 1987, 1999; Pickering, 1995, for example). Gender theorist and science studies scholar Karen Barad argues that "[r]epresentationalism is the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent; in particular, that which is represented is held to be independent of all practices of representing" (2007, p. 46). The dichotomy between language as matter and language as medium, which I have aimed to transgress through transliteracy, is one such correlate of representationalism, for example (see .i; .v; also 1.2).

dichotomies (between language as material event and language as a transparent medium, and correlative dichotomies between authorship and process, and theory and practice) that I aim to displace through transliteracy and in *Gaudy Bauble* (see .i and .v). These dichotomies are correlates of the particular theory-driven conception of experimental practice, historical epistemologies and representationalisms enacted within conceptual writing. The main function of the chapter is to develop an argument for engaging practice-led and performative approaches to experimentation⁴⁷ (Barad, 2007; Blackman, 2014; Despret, 2008; Hacking, 1983; Haraway, 1997; Latour, 1987, 1999; Mol, 2001; Pickering, 1995; Rheinberger, 1997, 2013, for example), and embodied epistemologies (Despret, 2008; Haraway, 1988/1991, for example) in experimental writing practices. I will introduce some of these interdisciplinary debates from within STS and related perspectives in my discussion of conceptual writing and the *Xenotext Experiment* in this chapter. In Chapter Two, I will engage these debates to develop transliteracy as a subversion of conceptual writing (and a development of postmodernist experimental fiction (see Chapter Three)) with a transdisciplinary and specifically queer avant-garde orientation. The final part of Chapter One develops a rationale on the basis of which transliteracy has enacted the presumption that there are no inherent ontological differences between diverse experimental practices (1.4.4; 1.5, see also 2.0).

⁴⁷ Performativity in experimentation means that experimental practices and systems produce the phenomena purportedly under investigation (see 2.0 for more extensive definition of the concept; also .i). If something is seen to work in a performative way, agency exceeds the individual and is distributed in a context of existing power structures, experimental constellations, and significant others. Performativity is not the same as more voluntarist forms of production such as creativity or expression perhaps, which are based on the idea of an artist or creator executing or articulating a certain content. Rather, the performative efficacy of an experimental system relies on what the sociologist of science Bruno Latour (1987, 1999) termed a network of human and nonhuman actors, for example.

1.1 Conceptual writing: the contemporary avant-garde

One of the presumptions within conceptual writing is that conceptual writing *is* the contemporary avant-garde. Figurehead Kenneth Goldsmith's *ubuweb* is the largest collection of avant-garde material on the internet, and it includes a section on conceptual writing. *Ubuweb*'s confident twitter tagline is: "All Avant-garde. All The Time" (see Fig. 4). The purpose of this section is to illustrate the status and reach of (some) conceptual writing which arguably has had an ongoing impact on what counts as experimental literature beyond the field of poetry where it first originated (see .vi, for a discussion of the marginalisation of fictions that experiment with the materiality *and* semiotics of language since conceptual writing has shaped the terms of the debates). Arguably, conceptual writing extends the way in which earlier avant-gardes (e.g. language writing) have worked across the historical distinction between poetry and prose. For example, the genre-defining anthology *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* (Dworkin & Goldsmith, 2010) enlists various novel-length prose texts (Steve McCaffery's *Panopticon* (1980/2002), and Kenneth Goldsmith's *Traffic* (2007), for example), as well as canonical avant-garde novels (Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote: which was a Dream* (1986), Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* (1951), James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), and Georges Perec's *A Void* (1969)) that have influenced my own long-term practice.

Key conceptual writers have garnered the attention of the media and science journalism. This includes the U.S. poet, *ubuweb* founder, and *MoMA*'s first poet laureate (2013) Kenneth Goldsmith appearing at the Whitehouse⁴⁸ (2011) and on US national

⁴⁸ 11th May 2011 Goldsmith appeared at presidential couple Obama's *A Celebration of American Poetry* at the White House. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMSvrIPhA4Y> [accessed 21st March 2016]

television, for example. These reports focus on Goldsmith's wearing a paisley suit as much as on his provocative poetic strategies including 'uncreativity' (1.2), the 'unboring boring', and plagiarism. Also in 2011, the Canadian experimental poet Christian Bök was commented upon in the BBC's *Science & Environment* section⁴⁹, the *New Scientist*⁵⁰, and *The Guardian*⁵¹ newspaper in the UK. I will develop some of the arguments I make in respect to conceptual writing more generally using the example of Bök's *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing) in 1.4-1.4.4. Under the headline "[p]oet writes verse in bug's gene and receives reply", the BBC report (2011) announced the world's first example of "living poetry". At times, conceptual writing's catchy, simplistic and provocative poetic strategies might read like a synopsis of a Hollywood blockbuster ("How does a poet ensure his work lives forever?" (*The Guardian*, 2011)). A media-friendly poetics, then, lending itself to being written about, rather than being read? Following a reading of Michael Brown's autopsy report (the black teenager fatally shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2015) *qua* poem on 13th March 2015 at Brown University, public opinion appears to have turned against Goldsmith.⁵² My intention is not to add to the critiques of the racism enacted in Goldsmith's particular piece. Rather, I argue that the normative epistemologies and experimental structures reproduced in conceptual writing create the possibility for works such as *The Body of Michael Brown* to emerge. The

⁴⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13001382> [accessed 21st March 2016]

⁵⁰ <https://www.newscientist.com/blogs/culturelab/2011/05/christian-boks-dynamic-dna-poetry.html> [accessed 21st March 2016]

⁵¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2011/apr/24/dna-poem-christian-Bök-xenotext> [accessed 21st March 2016]

⁵² <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/mar/17/michael-brown-autopsy-report-poem-kenneth-goldsmith> [accessed 21st March 2016]

following section maps out some of the concepts that have been shaping conceptual writing.



Fig. 4: The tagline "All avant-garde. All the time." on Ubuweb's twitter profile was recently replaced by "Founded in 1996 by @kg_ubu"(Kenneth Goldsmith's twitter handle). I could not verify the origin of Fig. 4, but it is reproduced (as a branding exercise?) on ubuweb's site⁵³

1.2 'Uncreativity' and the dichotomy between authorship and process

A central concern that shapes conceptual writing practices is to explore modes of authorship that go beyond the traditional model of the individual subject expressing herself. This extends existing problematisations of lyrical forms of expression within language writing (see 1.3), and arguably an orientation within earlier avant-garde literatures which are often seen to enact more collective (rather than subjective) forms of signification.

Co-editor (with Goldsmith) of the arguably genre-defining anthology *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* Craig Dworkin confirms an editorial policy which focused on text that “does not seek to express unique, coherent or consistent

⁵³ <http://www.ubu.com/resources/podcast.html> [accessed 21st March 2016]

individual psychologies and that [...] refuses familiar strategies of authorial control” (2010, p. xliii). He continues that “[i]nstead of natural expression or individual authorial voice, the anthology sought impersonal procedure. Instead of psychological development or dramatic narrative, it sought systems of exhaustive logical [...] permutation” (ibid). Goldsmith (2005) in his provocative, manifesto-like *Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing* suggests that this concept-led, literary machine is not to be interfered with. He states that “[t]o work with a plan that is preset is one way of avoiding subjectivity. [...] [T]he writer would select the basic form and rules that would govern the solution of the problem. After that the fewer decisions made in the course of completing the work, the better. This eliminates the arbitrary, the capricious, and the subjective as much as possible. This is the reason for using this method” (p.109). This terminology of interference reoccurs in Dworkin’s editorial where he states that admired works were often omitted from the collection because they had “too much authorial intervention” (2010, p. xliii), preferring works incorporating strategies of “automatism, reticence, obliquity, and modes of noninterference” (p. xliii-xliv).

The rationale that shapes conceptual writing's orientation towards process and "against expression" is 'uncreativity' (Goldsmith, 2008).⁵⁴ Uncreativity as a radical strategy derives from the provocation that any new literary production only adds to the already existing surplus of written material in the digital age. In a context of presumed overproduction, uncreativity is considered the most progressive and radical writing strategy, the one that distances conceptual writing from all precedent avant-gardes. Uncreativity as an orientation is further shaped by the presumption that the potential for

⁵⁴ <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2008/06/conceptual-poetics-kenneth-goldsmith/> [accessed 1 April 2016]

linguistic innovation has been exhausted by precedent avant-gardes (*After Language Poetry* is a special issue of the journal *OEI* (Lundgerg et al., 2001) published on *ubuweb*⁵⁵, for example), and that science has replaced literature as the field generating the most imaginative narratives (Bök, 2013). The language poets “have so thoroughly exhausted the field of experimentation” that “we can no longer generate any new forms of poetry since every option has already been tried” (Bök, 2001c, first paragraph; see also Perloff, 2004).⁵⁶ Under the banner of uncreativity, “[t]he conscientious writer's task is ... to curb productivity” (Dworkin, 2010, p. xliii). The conscientious writer's task is to reuse, plagiarise, transpose, cut & paste, *detourne*, or recontextualise existing language material, ideally in bulk. In other words, conceptual writers “[u]nderstand ... writing to be more graphic than semantic, more a physically material event than a disembodied or transparent medium for referential communication” (ibid).

This rationale (uncreativity) connects a commitment to language as a material event to process-led (conceptual) writing. Whereas referentiality and semantic (new?) content are connected to authorship, inspiration, innovation, creativity, overproduction, expression, sentimentality (as opposed to intellect) (Dworkin, 2010, p. xliii), 'lyrical interference of the individual as ego' (Dworkin quoting Charles Olson, ibid), and

⁵⁵ <http://www.ubu.com/papers/oei/index.html> [accessed 30 March 2016]

⁵⁶ The argument has been made that many of the major preoccupations of contemporary experimental poetics are further engagements with their initial problematisations within L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry (or language writing), rather than anything more radically original. For example, language writing's centralisation of the nonrepresentational capacities of language, that is the idea that the signs of language are materiality and substance as such, rather than just refer to “things of nature” (Bernstein, 1986/2001, p. 44) is intensified in contemporary approaches to working with heaps of language that are not meant to be read. Further, the impersonalisation of the writing process within conceptual writing might be seen to extend language writing's precedent critiques of natural expression, spontaneity and personal authenticity in mainstream poetry (pp. 40-41, for example).

ultimately the psychological individual. Conceptual writing practices enact the dichotomy between language as a material event and language as semiotic function (see .v) as a correlative dichotomy between process and authorship . Accordingly, conceptual writing is not meant to be read (for semantic content). A 'thinkership' is thought to have replaced a more traditional readership (Goldsmith, 2008, last paragraph).

In *Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing* (2005), Goldsmith famously argued that there is nothing worse than "art that wallows in gaudy baubles"⁵⁷ (p. 110). Like expression, subjectivity, lyricism, referentiality, innovation, and creativity, "art that wallows in gaudy baubles" (ibid) contravenes the logicity, depersonalisation, and alleged neutrality of conceptual writing. The title of my novella is *Gaudy Bauble*. It subverts, satirizes and embraces the assumption that authorship and subjectivity should be likened to wallowing, sentimentality, gaudiness or even lyricism and expression. *Gaudy Bauble* stands for what is excluded from conceptual writing, including more complex and relational enactments of subjectivity, authorship, causality and plot, and the potential for radical literary innovation if more marginal subjectivities were recruited into experimental writing processes, rather than obviated (see Chapter Two).

⁵⁷ Full quote: "New materials are one of the great afflictions of contemporary writing. Some writers confuse new materials with new ideas. There is nothing worse than seeing art that wallows in gaudy baubles. The electronic writing landscape is littered with such failures" (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 110-111).

1.3 Theory-driven perspectives versus the 'turn to practice' in science and technology studies

I have quoted some of the language of interference, temptation, and interception in relation to conceptual writing, because they appear to derive from the positivist sciences and historical epistemologies such as scientific positivism and objectivism. Historical epistemologies in the empirical sciences rely on a particular unmarked version of subjectivity, a subject-of-no-subjectivity, operating an experimental apparatus without bias and interference so as to represent a scientific object-under-investigation (and that in turn represents 'nature') as it 'really is'. The clear separation of human interference and 'nonhuman', empirical object is seen to guarantee the uncorrupted nature of the discovery, and the facticity of what emerged from the experimental procedure (Haraway, 1988/1991; also Hacking, 1983, for example; see also 1.4.2). Historical epistemologies are connected to incontestable truth claims and sociopolitical and economical power. They have been connected to the *a priori* rejection of criticality, questioning, and the contestation that gender, race and class-related ideologies could possibly affect the empiricist sciences (Harding, 1986; Braidotti & Lykke, 1996; Mayberry et al., 2001).⁵⁸ As a machine that runs its course with minimal authorial interference, conceptual writing strategies enact historical epistemologies in literature. Conceptual writing strategies designed to bypass the authorial subject do not bypass the authorial subject at all, but inadvertently reproduce the problematic subject of scientific

⁵⁸ One of feminist science studies founding texts, *The feminist question in science* (Harding, 1986), links the sciences' extreme resistance to consider "metatheoretical assumptions" and feminist critiques to the strong positivist and empirical traditions (see also Braidotti & Lykke, 1996, p. 3).

positivism. Inhabiting the very potent unmarked category, this subject-of-no-subjectivity is directly linked to incontestable forms of objectivity, and epistemological and social power.

As part of an ongoing 'turn to practice' in science studies (Barad, 2007; Hacking, 1983; Latour, 1987; 1999; Mol, 2001; Pickering, 1997; Rheinberger, 1997, for example), many scholars have rejected objectivist claims of 'no interference' in favour of more embodied epistemologies and ontologies that consider the performativity of experimentation (Barad, 2007; Blackman, 2014; Despret, 2008; Haraway, 1997; Latour, 1987, 1999; Mol, 2001; Pickering, 1995; Rheinberger, 1997, 2013, for example). Cogent analyses of case studies and ethnographies of "laboratory life" (Latour & Woolgar, 1979) and experimentation have been put forward that documented a discrepancy between embodied, localised, situated scientific practices and experiments, and the way they were conceptualised in scientific theories, literatures, and papers (Latour, 1987, 1999; Mol, 2001 for example). From these perspectives, experimental practices always exceed, or drastically differ from, the concepts they are designed to test, verify or embody. In *Science in Action*, for example, Bruno Latour (1987) argued that closely following scientific practices has shown him that scientists do something different to what they say they do.

Arguably, a similar disjuncture exists between the theory and practice of conceptual writing. In conceptual writing the concepts *shape*, but do not determine the writing process and literary output. Consider Marjorie Perloff's (2012) close-reading of Kenneth Goldsmith's allegedly unreadable work *Traffic* (2007). *Traffic* records "a twenty-four-hour period of New York radio station WINS (1010 AM) 'Panasonic Jam Cam [Camera]' traffic reports at ten-minute intervals on the first day of a holiday weekend" (Perloff, 2012, p. 200). Perloff argues that subjective decisions have shaped Goldsmith's

allegedly machinic transcriptions. *Traffic* "is hardly passive recycling" (2012, p. 220), Perloff argues. There is "something surreal about this seemingly ordinary sequence of traffic reports" (p. 208). Artful authorial manipulation, she suggests, turn the traffic report into a "theatre of the absurd" (p. 211). For example, on close-reading, the 24 (rather than 48) hour period covered in *Traffic* appears to extend over an entire bank holiday weekend (p. 207).

I argue that Goldsmith's unacknowledged manipulation, authorial interference and staging of 'unoriginal' genius, to use Perloff's (2014) term, parallels the unacknowledged labour involved in staging the powerful unmarked subject position in scientific positivism (Latour, 1987, 1999; Haraway, 1997; see also 1.4.1). In the context of avant-garde literature (rather than science), conceptual writing practices might not be staging epistemological truth claims, objectivity, or positivism, but they are staging (unoriginal) genius, power and the spectacle of self-transformation. Ultimately, these practices and stagings have engendered Goldsmith's emergence as the *MOMA*'s poet laureate, for example (see Bruno Latour (1999) for a discussion of the emergence of chemist Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) as the discoverer of microbial fermentation over the course of a series of historical experiments; also 2.4.1). Conceptual writing strategies might not produce scientific matters of fact. Staging the principle of uncreativity (in opposition to creativity and mainstream literature), they produce avant-garde credentials and status within and beyond the discipline.

Historically, experimental practices in the sciences are naturalised, hidden and increasingly insidious techniques of producing gendered, normative and exclusive subject positions. I argue the same is the case in conceptual writing. In Chapter Two I will develop transliteracy which heeds Haraway's call that any technique or practice

involved in the (re)production of subject and object positions "must be relentlessly visible and open to critical intervention" (1997, p. 37).

As many feminist science scholars have argued, historical epistemologies not only define those who have access to the normative subject positions created therein, but also those who don't (Haraway, 1997; Harding, 1986; Mayberry et al., 2001). "How did some men become transparent, self-invisible, legitimate witnesses of matter of fact, while most men and all women were made simply invisible, removed from the scene of the action?" (Harway, 1997, p. 29) Unsurprisingly, more subversive approaches to conceptual writing have come from those whose subjectivities are unlikely to disappear from their literary output (those who cannot and do not want to divorce semantic content or signification from the material text). For example, Caroline Bergvall asks: "How does one create textual works where the authorial hold over the text is somehow distanced, perhaps neutralized, yet where the structural impact of experience, of living, of loving, of knowing, of reading are in fact recognized?" (2012, p. 12) And "how does one put a text together that depersonalizes, that disengages from personalized modes, yet manages to engage with processes of personification and identification?" (p. 21) The 'softer', more nuanced (and often feminist and black) approaches to conceptual writing represented in *I'll Drown My Book: Conceptual Writing by Women* (Bergvall et al., 2012) have recognised that subjectivity cannot be reduced to psychologism and sentimentality. They have rejected the dichotomy between authorship and process. Contributions include texts by poets and writers Dodie Bellamy, Tina Darragh, Renee Gladman, Bhanu Kapil, Harryette Mullen, Redell Olsen, a.rawlings, Hannah Weiner, and Christine Wertheim, which have largely emerged within experimental poetry (rather than fiction).

I have argued that the queer avant-garde orientation of my writing method and narratives (Waidner, 2010, 2011) were rooted in my situated, embodied context as a gender nonconforming writer and nonnative English speaker (.v). A queer avant-garde writing methodology cannot be divorced from my subjectivity. In *Gaudy Bauble* I have significantly developed the way in which I have recruited my subjectivity in my practice. Transliteracy enacts the perspective that experimentation is an “adventure in the course of which subjectivities overlap, are transformed, actualized and extended to the subjectivity of the other” (Despret, 2008, p.129). Transliteracy challenges and complicates the notion of subjective expression and authorship without in any way doing away with subjectivity. I will develop these reflections in Chapter Two.

The presumption that "langpo [language poetry] has pushed poetry as far as poetry on the page can go" (Bök, 2001c, second paragraph) has not only engendered strategic uncreativity, but also an orientation toward interdisciplinarity. There is an interest in producing literature beyond the page, i.e. texts “that might easily be mistaken for an interactive sculpture, a mechanized appliance, or even an artificial ecosystem” (Bök, 2001c, third paragraph). Steve McCaffery (2014) terms approaches that extend literature towards other domains, for example architecture, ‘parapoetic’.

1.4 The *Xenotext Experiment* (Bök, 2000s-ongoing)

The second part of the chapter reads *Xenotext Experiment* (Bök, 2000s-ongoing) through the lens of interdisciplinary approaches of experimentation from within STS so as to to illustrate and consolidate some of the arguments I have made in respect to conceptual writing strategies more generally. The *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing) is a project that

extends conceptual poetry into biochemistry. To summarise, experimental poet Christian Bök "has encoded a poem (called 'Orpheus') into the genome of a germ so that, in reply, the cell builds a protein that encodes yet another poem (called 'Eurydice'" (Bök, 2015, back cover; see Bök, 2008⁵⁹, for a summary of the rationale behind the project). I will discuss the *Xenotext Experiment* as a unique but representative example that encapsulates several of conceptual writing's defining discourses (1.4-1.4.4). They include the implementation of a constraint-based writing procedure; the preoccupation with authorship; the reproduction of historical epistemologies and normative forms of subjectivity and objectivity; and the extension of literature into other disciplines such as biochemistry. I argue that the *Xenotext Experiment* [XE]⁶⁰ stages an uncritical engagement with biochemistry, and reproduces not only a version of scientific positivism, but also other normative concepts including biological determinism and 'gene control' (Fox Keller, 1995; Fausto-Sterling, 2001, for examples). I will argue that the XE enacts an 'additive' model of interdisciplinarity, which was shaped by the presumption that, prior to Bök's intervention, literature and science were two autonomous, self-contained disciplines (1.4.4). In contrast, transliteracy was shaped within critical perspectives that already consider the ongoing, mutual traffic of ideas between the various disciplines and re-orientates and subverts conceptual writing strategies accordingly (Chapter Two). I discuss the normative experimental structures uncritically reproduced in the XE in this chapter so as to develop an argument for engaging different, performative approaches to experimentation in avant-garde writing practices, for example transliteracy.

In this section, I will specifically focus on the particular entities or phenomena,

⁵⁹ <http://www2.law.ed.ac.uk/ahrc/script-ed/vol5-2/editorial.asp> [accessed 1 April 2016]

⁶⁰ Subsequently cited in the text as *XE*.

the subjects and objects, *produced* within the *XE*. They include the unmarked, maverick experimental subject and polymath Christian Bök; the unique poems *Orpheus* and *Eurydice*, that Bök 'discovered'; and the biologically determinist, feminine microbe. I begin by introducing the project as represented by Bök and the media, including some of its reception, the debates it engendered and its human and nonhuman key players.

1.4.1 Key player 1: Bök, polymath

In this section I will draw attention to Bök's polymath and maverick status as part of my analysis of the specific subjects and objects produced within the wider experimental parameters of the *XE*. With articles in *The Guardian* and the *New Scientist*, exhibitions at *Text Festival*, Bury, for example, international lecture tours, and most recently a book of related poetry (Bök, 2015), the *XE* attracts a fair amount of attention within and beyond the field of experimental literature. On 28th April 2011, the BBC science pages⁶¹ reported that Christian Bök successfully embedded a poem into the genetic sequence of a microorganism (Buchanan, 2011; see also Bök's (2011) blog post "The *Xenotext* Works"⁶²). Further, the poet engineered the gene in such a way that it prompts the microorganism to produce a particular protein, which is itself another encoded poem.

The report tells its general audience that cells use their genetic sequences as templates for constructing proteins. Bök manipulated the genetic sequence of a test organism, *E.coli*, which against all odds now produces the anticipated protein. (In his own words, Bök "engineer[ed] a primitive bacterium so that it becomes not only a

⁶¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13001382> [accessed 1 April 2016]

⁶² <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2011/04/the-xenotext-works/> [accessed 1 April 2016]

durable archive for storing a poem, but also a useable machine for writing a poem” (2008, p. 229).) Like Bök’s lectures on the project (available on *youtube*⁶³ and *vimeo*⁶⁴), the BBC report emphasises the extreme difficulty of devising a two-level chemical cryptogram⁶⁵ that not only links “letters of the alphabet to specific nucleotides” (i.e. the type of molecules that make up a genetic sequence), [but] also [...] allow[s] the ensuing protein to be decoded back into a brand new poem, by assigning a different set of letters to specific amino acids” (the organic compounds which make up a protein) (Buchanan, 2011). It took “Dr. Bok [sic] four years just to work out the code” (ibid, sixth paragraph).

Initially envisioned as a collaboration with scientist Stuart Kauffman, the “iCore Chair for the Institute of Biocomplexity and Informatics at the University of Calgary” (Bök, 2008, p. 229), more recent progress reports see Kauffman reduced to a provider of after-hours laboratory space, or disappearing altogether. Bök himself emerges as the maverick who, without formal scientific training, “taught himself molecular biology and computer programming for the purpose of his project” (Buchanan, 2011, eighth paragraph). “I have ... done all the genetic engineering and proteomic engineering myself, designing and optimizing the gene on my own, while working out the simulations for the resultant, foldable protein, using my own academic resources,” Bök (2011, fourth paragraph) writes in a blog post.⁶⁶ He called on a commercial lab merely to “build the gene” for him (ibid). This narrative culminates in Bök’s declaring himself “the first poet in literary history to have engineered a microbe to write poetry” (ibid, third paragraph).

In addition to this historical event, Bök regularly appears as a sculptor. The BBC

⁶³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyCQfBZwRPA> [accessed 3rd March 2016]

⁶⁴ <https://vimeo.com/58653647> [accessed 3rd March 2016]

⁶⁵ A cryptogram is an encoded message (or poem).

⁶⁶ <http://ronsilliman.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/christian-b-o-k-this-is-one-of-notes.html> [accessed 1 April 2016]

website depicts him next to a large scale model of the gene he built out of so-called *Molymod Molecular Kits*.⁶⁷ This was exhibited for example at the *Text Festival* in Bury, UK in 2011 (occasioning the BBC report). Whilst on a PR tour, Bök's current objective in terms of the (less multimedia) core aspect of the experiment, is having the gene implanted into the target organism (*D.radiodurans*) rather than *E.coli*. *D.radiodurans* is thought to be extremely durable, facilitating the post-apocalyptic survival of the poem.

The *XE* foregrounds the cryptographic complexity, unprecedentedness, ambitiousness and herculean nature of the project, epitomised in the repeated fact that it cost Bök four years of failures, near resignations, probability-defying new starts, in short superhuman persistence to work out, or to use Bök's terminology, to *discover* a code that fitted the requirements of the brief. Whereas the BBC report neglects to report that the benign protein produced as a result of the new gene causes the microbe to fluoresce with a rosy or pink glow. This pink glow is the microbe's enactment of the semiotic content of the poetic response enciphered in the protein, the first line of which reads "[t]he faery is rosy of glow" (Bök, 2011, 3rd paragraph, for example). Symptomatically for the disparaging and side-lining of semiotic content in conceptual writing (and the foregrounding of the material working relationship with the text), the poems themselves have received less media or critical attention. When Bök himself mentions them, he undermines the subversive and queer potential of his pink faery by describing its glow as the feminine response of a "nymphet" to Bök's original "herdboy's" poem, *Orpheus* (which begins with the phrase "Any style of life is prim" (Bök, 2011, 3rd paragraph).⁶⁸

⁶⁷ <http://www.molymod.com/> [accessed 23 March 2016]

⁶⁸ At the time of finalising this Chapter in April 2016, the link to this quote has disappeared or been removed from the internet. Further, the two poems themselves appear to have vanished from the internet (bar their first lines).

The fact that in my referential and socio-cultural universe any *faery* that glows *pink* in a *fay way* (Bök, 2013, my emphasis) is as likely to be male as female suggests interesting queer reading possibilities of microbial poetry, but this is not my intention. Rather than add to the existing feminist and queer critiques of the *XE* (Pester, 2013, for example), the thesis draws attention to some of the normative structures and epistemologies that underpin the powerful subject positions and the reproduction of sex and gender inequalities, and that are produced in conceptual writing strategies in a largely implicitly and unacknowledged way.

1.4.2 Authorship controversy: pink microbe or red herring?

In this section I discuss the controversy that ensued around the particular enactment of authorship in the *XE*. Using the example of authorship in the *XE*, I illustrate my argument that conceptual writing stages historical epistemologies and the normative subjects and objects connected to them.

In 2011, U.S. poet Ron Silliman, via *Twitter*, challenged Bök's claim that the microbe had authored the second poem (which is enciphered in the protein the microbe produces as a result of its engineered gene). In his blog entry from 10th May 2011⁶⁹, Silliman argues that, actually, it is Bök telling the microbe what to write, rather than the other way around. On 17th May 2011, Bök responds as follows:

"I think that [Silliman's] objection fails to comprehend the nature of the writing process required to generate these two poems. I do not tell the organism what to write - *it tells me what to write*. I cannot simply make it say whatever I want, since the *biochemical constraints* that govern the translation of the genetic

⁶⁹ "Deinococcus radiodurans – the future of printing?"

<http://ronsilliman.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/deinococcus-radiodurans-future-of.html>

sequence into a protein sequence define the parameters for my own expression. I have to respond directly to its own biology. I have to produce a viable, benign protein that is neither cytotoxic to the organism nor destroyed by the organism. I have to generate a gene sequence, optimized for implantation into the organism so that it integrates easily into such a genome. I have to come up with an encipherment for my message that can actually fulfill all these tasks, while saying something both beautiful and meaningful – both in the implanted genome and in the resulting protein. I am, in effect, trying to conduct a kind of dialogue between my own lingual code and the genetic code itself. I might suggest that, in this dialogue, the organism has lots of input, since I am entirely at its beck and call. I have to respond *entirely* to *its* rules. I have not written the poem – so much as I have *discovered* it, *finding* its "singular potential" among eight trillion, useless ciphers...." (Bök, 2011, my emphases).⁷⁰

Whether constraints imposed by the microbe's physiology prove the generative principle, or whether it is Bök inscribing his poem upon the reluctant organism, Silliman left Bök's response unchallenged. The controversy dissolved into friendly banter between the two poets ("no worries, Ron"). It is either Bök telling the bacterium what to say (if you believe Silliman), or the bacterium telling Bök (if you believe Bök). The authorship question was also presented by a member of the audience in the Q&A after a lecture at Simon Fraser University in January 2013, entitled *The Xenotext: A Progress Report*⁷¹, suggesting that the framing of the *XE* in view of "who writes" captures the public imagination.

I argue that the framing of the experiment as a question of 'Who writes? Bök or *E.coli*?', that is, the focus on determining authorship *one-sidedly*, directly parallels the particular either/or distribution of agency that underpins historical epistemologies.

⁷⁰ <http://ronsilliman.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/christian-b-o-k-this-is-one-of-notes.html> [accessed 1 April 2016]

⁷¹ *The Xenotext (A Progress Report)*, Lecture at Simon Fraser University 25th January 2013, <https://vimeo.com/58653647> [accessed 3rd March 2016]

Locating all agency with the microbe and its biological specificity, Bök pursues a version of scientific positivism (and a form of authorship linked to conceptual writing hence avant-garde credentials); whereas Silliman's reading (which locates control and agency with Bök) amounts to a staging of scientific constructionism (and a form of authorship linked to mainstream forms of creativity and expression).

In the natural sciences, positivism or objectivism often entail a particular language of *finding* or *discovering* something, reproduced in the *XE* (i.e. *discovering* the one possible cipher or the one mutually encipherable poem couplet; or the previously undiscovered, natural entity in a scientific experiment). This 'discovering' is seen to be directly opposed to 'constructing', 'fabricating', or 'creating', for example. In other words, historical epistemologies depend on a clear distinction between constructionism/relativism and objectivism/positivism. The experimenter has *either* made (up) the facts, *or* s/he accounts for the facts as they are, i.e. something emerges that is not human-made. The credibility of a scientific object depends on whether the experimental subject is seen to have made it (up), *or* discovered; which in turn translates into a particular way of determining agency, i.e. does agency lie with the experimental subject, or with the object under investigation (e.g. Haraway, 1988/1991, 1997; Latour, 1987, 1999). This dichotomy of constructionism/relativism and objectivism/positivism in the mainstream sciences, I argue, parallels the dichotomies of making something (up), creativity, innovation, expression, subjectivity, semiotics, authorship, and 'Bök writes' on the one hand, and process-led strategies, uncreativity, materiality, conceptualisms, and 'the microbe writes' on the other in conceptual writing.⁷²

⁷² Modern dichotomies continue to inform the popular conception of science as well as the version of science enacted in many scientific and literary experiments. In *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (1997) Latour links the paradigm that underlies

By assigning agency (or authorship) to the experimental object, the microbe, Bök effectively stages himself as the mere executor, facilitator, avant-garde poet, the subject of scientific positivism, and subject-of-no-subjectivity, aiding the natural emergence of the one 'true' poem couplet inherent in the experimental constellation. Earlier in the chapter I have argued what some of the problems with this subject position might be, including its exclusiveness, purchase on power, and the production of marginal subject positions for others (1.3). The emphasis on Bök's extensive labour behind the discovery of the poem does not contradict the assignment of exclusive agency to the microbe. Even for those who have access to it, the production of the subject-of-no-subjectivity involves labour and staging.⁷³ The microbe as experimental object substitutes or acts as a generative constraint, the concept that determines the writing process. She is integrated into the experimental system, engendering further objects, including the cipher, and the two poems, *Eurydice* and *Orpheus*. We have already seen how these 'objects' have little purchase on content and meaning. They resemble the passive objects of scientific positivism that are defined by their materiality alone. What might such an object look like, typically produced within mainstream scientific experimentation and also within the *XE* (1.4.3)?

historical epistemologies to a false dichotomy between mind and world, or what Latour terms Descartes's fantasy of a mind-in-vat. Latour argues that only from the perspective of an unrealistic, disembodied mind does it make sense to theorise knowledge as distinct from the world. Only from this position does it make sense for a knower to wonder how to connect with "the outside world" (Latour, 1999, p. 4). This Cartesian 'fantasy' is at the root of representational dichotomies, i.e. correlates of the dichotomy that separates entities from entities represented (see .i; 1.0; 3.1).

⁷³ Latour has shown that it is the experimenter's task to facilitate the conditions that allow the experimental object to appear of its own accord (1987, 1999; also Rheinberger 1997, for example; see 2.5.1).

1.4.3 Key player 2: the microbe, biological determinism and the concept of gene control

So far, I have discussed the humans and nonhumans produced in the *XE* as the quasi-positivist, impossibility-defying, repeat-failure-surviving, maverick experimenter and herd-boy-themed Christian Bök; the uniquely enciphered, discovered poem couplet and embodiment of immortal aspirations; and the feminine nymphet and microbe, whose subjectivity is reduced to its materiality, and its materiality to its function as a formulaic constraint, i.e. its role in narrowing down the range of possible ciphers. I will argue that the *XE* stages a particular version of biological determinism and a biologically determined (feminine) subject or object, the microbe ("Euridyce"), whose agency is reduced to the agency of her biological body.

The *XE* not only stages a biologically determined microbe, but also biological determinism itself as a particular version of biology. The queer cultural studies theorist Sara Ahmed (2008) reminds us that what counts as biology has been a question within feminist enquiry rather than a given, and the version of biology reproduced here, where biology *dictates* as opposed to *influences* the micro-organism's behaviour, has come under critique from within feminism, queer and gender studies, critical race studies, sciences studies, philosophy and increasingly the natural sciences and molecular biology themselves. All of these critiques render the idea (*a priori* of the experiment) practically untenable. Framed by the mutually exclusive propositions: does the experiment work or does it not work, *R. durans* Euridyce's agential room for manoeuvre, so to speak, is narrowed to the extreme and ultimately closed down within the particular experimental set up. Her options, such as destroying the protein, not producing the right protein

hence ‘saying’ something other than the anticipated poem, dying *en masse*, *et cetera*, are constituted as failures of the experiment. They are non-events, the details of which have yet to be reported and mined for their subversive potential. What Bök does report (as a failure), *R. durans* noncompliance and liability to destroy the protein, suggests that she is a particularly queer and ‘willful subject’ (Ahmed, 2014), who refuses to cooperate on Bök’s terms.

The *XE* not only enacts biological determinism, but more specifically a form of genetic determinism. Genetic determinism is a simplistic and powerful concept based on what the feminist historian and philosopher of science Evelyn Fox Keller discussed as the generative metaphors of “gene action” and “gene control” (1995). Fox Keller argues that these metaphors have shaped the progress of modern genetic science one-sidedly, at the cost of more nuanced, developmental alternatives that biologists have proposed since the early twentieth century. Gene action is the prevalent idea that genes produce their effects, or that “all development is merely an unfolding of pre-existing instructions encoded in the nucleotide structures in DNA” (Fox Keller, 1995, p. 21). This discourse has influenced scientists, administrators, funding agencies and policy makers, and provided “powerful rationales and incentives for mobilizing resources, for identifying particular research agendas, and for focusing scientific energies and attention in particular directions” (ibid).

From its conception, however, many scientists have argued that there were serious problems with the metaphor of gene control, and that more complex, technically possible research trajectories were marginalised because “no one was interested” (ibid, p. 35). As a consequence, in 2016, gene expression is little understood. It is now known that the causal connection between genotype – all the genes in the cells of an organism— and

phenotype - what the organism looks like and how it behaves - defies the simplicity presumed in the gene control and gene action models (Fausto-Sterling, 2015a, for example).

Groundbreaking work on epigenetics or the microbiome for many confirm that social and cultural determinants affect basic biology, which in return might affect ecology, geology, in other words Earth itself (Fausto-Sterling, 2015a, for example). Accordingly, the current geo-historical epoch has been termed the Anthropocene, reflecting the significant effects of human behaviour on the Earth's ecosystems. This describes the active role of human agency, or human presence, not only in scientific facts, but also in all matter formerly known as nature (Latour, 2014). The version of objectivity and other historical epistemologies enacted in conceptual writing, that relied on the separability of natural phenomena from human agency is no longer tenable in this context, if ever it was.

A revised conception of what it means to be the subject and object of a (queer) avant-garde writing practice is central and timely, and my thesis and novella are one attempt to stage what might be at stake in this (ad)venture. In view of my current discussion of the *XE* and the subjects and objects produced within its parameters, the question 'Who writes?' in my view needs to be reframed as 'Who would we rather they wrote'?! This statement will be unpacked for the reader in Chapter Two where I will argue that the production of nonnormative subjects, objects and hybrids in practice and content is central to the queer avant-garde poetics I have pursued through transliteracy and in *Gaudy Bauble*.

Transliteracy and *Gaudy Bauble* are inspired by interdisciplinary critiques of scientific positivism (and relativism) within science and technology studies (STS), Actor-

Network Theory (ANT), and related perspectives. From these perspectives, a distribution of agency across networks of human and nonhuman actors more faithfully describes the reality of experimentation and laboratory practice (Barad, 2007; Blackman, 2014; Despret, 2008; Latour, 1987; 1999; Mol, 2001; Pickering, 1995; Rheinberger, 1997, for example). As early as 1988, Haraway proposed more embodied and relational epistemologies which she called situated knowledges. Situated knowledges require that on the one hand “the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor or agent” (1988/1991, p. 198) in their own right, rather than an inert and passive resource. And on the other hand, they require a more relational account of subjectivity that pays attention to embodiment and difference⁷⁴, rather than the normalising, transcendental, disembodied, unmarked and unbiased subject of scientific positivism, or the similarly disembodied subject of relativism.

Subverting the either/or, subject/object distribution of agency in the mainstream sciences, Latour argued that, on the contrary, “[t]he more activity there is from one, the more activity there is from the other” (1999, p.147). In *Gaudy Bauble* I have developed transliteracy as an avant-garde writing practice that shares agency across ontologically diverse actors, human and nonhuman, real and fictional, material and semiotic, and across practice and content. I will develop and reflect on transliteracy in Chapters Two and Three.

⁷⁴ In cultural studies and related perspectives, the debates around more relational and embodied forms of subjectivity have an extensive genealogy (see Blackman et al. (2008) for an overview). Since 2011, I have been Managing Editor of the interdisciplinary journal *Subjectivity* (Palgrave), co-edited by Valerie Walkerdine and Lisa Blackman, which stages these debates. Undoubtedly, they have inspired transliteracy in many ways. In the thesis I have focused predominately on analytics that consider the production of subjectivity in *experimental practice*, and that have emerged from the turn to practice in STS and related perspectives.

1.4.4 Additive interdisciplinarity in the *Xenotext Experiment* versus the entanglement of fact and fiction in transdisciplinary perspectives

In the aforementioned lecture presented at Simon Fraser University, Bök (2013) critiqued contemporary poets' reluctance to engage with science in ways that are not merely 'writing about'. While I share this commitment, I question Bök's presumption that literature and science are two autonomous, self-contained disciplines originally, and consequently the particular strategy he adopts to connect them. The *XE* enacts an 'additive' version of interdisciplinarity, "integrat[ing] two mutually isolated domains of research [poetry and science] – domains that might not have, otherwise, had any reason to interact, except under the innovative conditions of this artistic exercise" (Bök, 2008, p. 230). One of the problems with this 'additive' approach is that, arguably, the *Xenotext Experiment* stages an uncritical engagement, if not an enchantment, with mainstream science, specifically microbiology, reproducing many of its normative, positivist presumptions, implicitly and explicitly.⁷⁵ Peter Middleton's tellingly titled *Physics Envy: American Poetry and Science in the Cold War and After* (2015) provides a map of the various ways in which American avant-garde poetry (Muriel Rukeyser, Charles Olson, and Rae Armantrout, for example) interrelated with the sciences, for example.

⁷⁵ The last decade or so has seen a proliferation of engagements from the humanities with the natural sciences, that range from unimaginative or uncritical borrowing of isolated scientific concepts in order to bolster or authenticate a theoretical argument (Papoulias & Callard, 2010), and that do not necessarily take into account the controversies, critiques and nuances of debate in the sciences themselves (Blackman, 2014, for example). A more expansive imaginary of what experiment – as practice and ethos – might offer in the space of interdisciplinarity has been called for (Callard & Fitzgerald, 2014).

This thesis and transliteracy extends a genealogy of transdisciplinary scholarship that has investigated the intersection of science and literature in scientific experimentation rather than work from the presumption of disciplinary autonomy. Situated within feminism, science and technology studies, sociology, anthropology or the natural sciences, longstanding transdisciplinary perspectives have rejected human exceptionalism, “and its corollary that culture is distinct and contrasted with nature” (MacCormack, 1980, p. 1; see also Haraway, 1989, 1997, 2014, for example). *Nature, Culture and Gender* (MacCormack & Strathern, 1980), for example, examines the assumptions behind the dichotomy of nature and culture, showing they are a particularity of western thought. In the foreword to *Languages of Nature: Critical Essays on Science and Nature* (Jordonava, 1986), Raymond Williams critiques the assumptions behind the widespread idea of an estrangement between the disciplines, and the modern “failure to recognize that versions of their relationship are inscribed in the categories science and literature themselves” (1986, p. 11). He argues that “the most notorious modern example of this failure was the ‘Two Cultures’ controversy of the 1950s and 1960s”⁷⁶ (ibid).

From these perspectives, ideologies, imaginaries fictions and narratives cannot be disentangled from scientific knowledge procedures, but they are always already embodied in what comes to be naturalized within scientific positivism. Haraway’s concept of figural realism (1997), for example, describes how normative metaphors, ideologies, fictions and narratives are literally embedded in scientific concepts, embodied in experimental apparatuses, enacted in experimental practices and realised in what manifests as a scientific fact, body, or object. Donna Haraway has argued that Christian

⁷⁶ *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (1959) is lecture by British scientist and novelist C.P. Snow, subsequently published as a book. It argues that Western society is split between two cultures, the humanities and the sciences.

salvation narratives inform technoscientific constructions of ‘progress’ or ‘discovery’ (1997, p. 10). Sarah Franklin (2000) used the example of the Hollywood films *Jurassic Park* to discuss the cross-fertilisations of fact and fiction, and the art/entertainment and scientific industries, arguing that “[p]aleontologists closely working with the producers attested to having solved certain [paleontological] mysteries through the experimentation required to animate the dinosaurs convincingly” (p. 223). “The imagination,” Franklin argues, “emerges as a ‘key component’ in the remaking of nature” (ibid) in scientific practice.

From these perspectives, the ways in which fictions and imaginaries materialise in scientific practices are far less *voluntarist* than those staged by Bök, the “poet in the medium of life” (2008, p. 229) (see also 3.1). Bök’s objective to “infect” genetics with the “poetic vectors” of its own discourse so as “to extend poetry itself beyond the formal limits of the book” (p. 230) might be countered with the perspective that poetry and fiction always already operate beyond the formal limits of the book: fictions shape what comes into being in scientific practice and experimentation, for example. These extended workings are disregarded in the rationale to connect two otherwise separate domains that shapes the *XE* and the version of interdisciplinarity enacted therein, and, arguably, they are disregarded in the rationale, uncreativity, that shapes conceptual writing strategies more generally. Like the commitment to extend literary experimentation into other domains, uncreativity is shaped within a literary context (of exhaustion and overproduction), hence by disciplinary introspection (see 1.2). On the other hand, from interdisciplinary perspectives, I argue that a strong argument *for* the innovation of different, nonnormative, queer fictions and imaginaries in experimental literature must be made, and this orientation has shaped transliteracy and *Gaudy Bauble*

(see 2.4.1). Transliteracy revitalizes an earlier avant-garde commitment to radical innovation and towards different futures. As a "queer tactics of writing", transliteracy might be linked "to a wider political project of subcultural political action" (Robinson, 2012, p. 3; also Wark, 2011). I develop the way in which *Gaudy Bauble* relates to contemporary LGBTQI+ activism in Chapter Three.

1.5 Airlifting concepts from science and technology studies into experimental writing?

One of the 'leaps' that the thesis makes is 'airlifting' or borrowing concepts and analytics that emerged in respect to scientific practice in STS into literature and experimental writing. On what basis might we compare the material culture of scientific practices to creative writing practices, as I have done in the thesis? Are not scientific practices shaped by projects and objectives that are entirely different to those of experimental fictions?⁷⁷ Arguably, the rationale that inspired me to airlift these situated debates and concepts from science to fiction is inherent in the performativity of experimentation itself (see 2.0), and the transdisciplinary field of study (STS) within which it emerged.

The apparent entanglement of fiction and fact (1.4.4) has engendered a wide range of scholarship that borrows diverse conceptual apparatuses from literature studies, linguistics, poststructuralism, art history and philosophy to analyse scientific knowledge

⁷⁷ In Chapter Two I argue that the main purpose of scientific and literary experimentation is actually shared. It is the creation of the conditions which allow unexpected events to emerge of their own accord (Hacking, 1983; Rheinberger, 1997, for example). Throughout the thesis I have been careful to consider the genealogical contexts within which diverse practices and analytics emerged within their respective disciplines, before exploring their intersections.

procedures (Haraway, 1988/1991, 1989, 1997; Latour; 1987; Rheinberger, 1997, for example). For example, Donna Haraway adapted literature scholar Katie King's (1991) "apparatus of literary production"⁷⁸ to understand the generation of bodies and other objects in scientific experimentation (Haraway, 1988/1991, p. 200). For Haraway, the fictional character FemaleMan, who she introduced in *Modest Witness* (1997), and who is inspired by Joanna Russ's sci-fi novel *The Female Man* (1975/2010), and the actual, commercially available, transgenic, laboratory animal model OncoMouse™, are both "the product[s] of writing technologies, one of SF literary and publishing practices, one of laboratory inscription practices" (p. 120). She draws on Erich Auerbach's standard work of literary theory, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1946), to articulate her understanding of the mimetic manner in which normative narratives, figures and metaphors, via the mimetic practices of a psychically invested subject, co-effect the physical world in science.

Given that transdisciplinary perspectives from within STS have airlifted concepts from literature to analyse scientific experimentation in the first place, my 're-transport' into literature and experimental writing, I argue, is less farfetched and controversial than at first it might appear. Whilst the conceptual apparatus that shaped transliteracy emerged in opposition to mainstream approaches to experimentation in the sciences, and experimental writing practices emerged in relation to precedent avant-garde literature and in opposition to mainstream literature (1.2; 3.1, for example), I argue that there are genealogical intersections and a mutual traffic of ideas, implicitly and explicitly, between literary and scientific experimental practices (see also Hayles, 1999;

⁷⁸<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzmKs1Fz7m9uZDVlMDFiNTctNjgzYy00YjI2LWFhZmUtZTI4NDUxNjAyMGFk/view?ddrp=1&hl=en&pli=1> [accessed 1 April 2016]

Middleton, 2015, for example, for related approaches in literature).⁷⁹

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on critiques of scientific relativism, positivism, biological determinism, gene control and an "ethic of interdisciplinarity that guides interaction between disciplines on the understanding of their pre-existing separateness" (Callard & Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 3) so as to identify some of the long-term presumptions that inform Christian Bök's *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing) and conceptual writing more widely. Conceptual writing, I argue, sets up a narrative about authorship, subjectivity, process-led writing strategies, disciplinary containment and language itself that gets in the way of developing more adequate approaches to subverting mainstream forms of literature and

⁷⁹ Recently, a shared genealogy of literary and scientific experimentation has been mapped out within German/Swiss literature which will help me to consolidate my argument. This scholarship has brought the performativity of experimentation more centrally into literature, further destabilising the common presumption that literary and scientific practices and knowledge procedures are fundamentally genealogically distinct. Between 2007 and 2008, a series of workshops at the ETH Zürich aimed to investigate the relationship between literature and experiment. For example, <http://www.lw.ethz.ch/Downloads/Plakat-08.pdf> [accessed 8th March 2016]. This investigation resulted in the publication of the four edited volumes that make up the anthology *Experiment und Literatur* (Gamper et al., 2009, 2010, 2011; Bies & Gamper, 2010; also Krause & Pethes, 2004). Divided into three epochs (Vol. I: 1580-1790; Vol II: 1790-1890; Vol. III: 1890-2010), and a complimentary volume, *Themes, Methods, Theories*, 80 + essays over 2000 pages explore the mutual exchange between scientific and literary knowledge procedures via individual, historical case studies. To give an example, Britta Herrmann (2010) argues that, around 1800, literature reinvented itself as a biotechnology, or a stimulus of the nervous system comparable to electrical shocks (p. 127). Herrmann argues that this pre-empts the contemporary idea that fictions have (corpo)real effects (p. 131). Whilst this scholarship revitalised an interest in experimentation in and beyond German literature studies, I argue that the project is blighted by the conspicuous absence of feminist science studies and its normative orientation to authenticating literature's purchase on epistemological power.

expression in avant-garde writing practices. How might we complicate mainstream versions of authorship without in any way doing away with subjectivity (Chapter Two)? How might we bring experimental writing strategies in line with a political commitment to criticality and affecting change (Chapter Three)? As a result of this analysis I have extended and specified my original aim to develop my practice beyond a perceived incompatibility between the enactment of language as *either* a material event *or* a transparent medium (which conceptual writing also enacts). One of the main concerns in view of developing my practice beyond preconceived norms and dichotomies was how to engage more performative approaches to experimentation (see 2.0). What might it mean to experiment with fiction if disciplinary distinctions are challenged and displaced, and all experimental practices are performative in different ways?

Chapter Two

Transliteracy: A Queer Avant-Garde Writing

Methodology

“Writing itself, I argue, is an experimental system. It is an experimental arrangement.”⁸⁰
Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Über die Kunst, das Unbekannte zu Erforschen*⁸¹

2.0 Introduction to Chapter Two

This chapter develops transliteracy as a queer avant-garde method for writing *Gaudy Bauble*. In Chapter One I have argued that conceptual writing strategies reproduce historical epistemologies and related, normative dichotomies that I have aimed to displace in my practice. Specifically, language is often enacted as *either* a material event *or* a transparent medium in conceptual writing and other avant-garde writing strategies; authorship and expression are enacted as contrary to process-led writing procedures; and factual, scientific modes of writing are enacted as contrary to fictions. I have argued that reproducing these dichotomies in experimental writing practices entails staging normative forms of subjectivity and objectivity, for example the bounded, discreet, voluntarist human subject-of-no-subjectivity, and the passive object of scientific positivism: for example, Bök's (2008-ongoing) microbe, his poem couplet, and, more generally, any conceptual text determined entirely by a concept. The enactment of

⁸⁰ *Orig.*: "Das Schreiben, so behaupte ich, ist selbst ein Experimentalsystem. Es ist eine Versuchsanordnung" (Rheinberger, 2013, p. 148).

⁸¹ *Transl.*: The Art of Researching the Unknown [my translation].

normativity closes down what I have termed the queer potential of avant-garde literature.

In STS and related perspectives, the performativity of experimentation refers to the assumption that scientific experiments produce the phenomena purportedly under investigation⁸² (Barad, 2007; Blackman, 2014; Despret, 2008; Haraway, 1997; Latour, 1987, 1999; Mol, 2001; Pickering, 1995; Rheinberger, 1997, 2013, for example). Recruiting this concept, transliteracy enacts the assumption that distinctions between representations and entities represented; language and other material and semiotic apparatuses of production; language as material event and signifying medium; form and content; authorship and process; subjectivity and objectivity; factual and fictional modes of writing; and realism and surrealism, for example, do not precede, but are being produced, enacted and stabilised within diverse experimental practices, including transliteracy (see .i). There are no fundamental ontological differences between diverse experimental practices, and I have provided a rationale for this seemingly radical move in 1.4.4 and 1.5.

⁸² The concept of performativity has a complex genealogy, starting from speech acts that in particular conditions of power produce the objects and subjects of which they speak (Austin, 1962); to systems of governance that produce the subjects they subsequently come to represent (Foucault, 1980); to the performativity of sex and gender as a reiteration of particular practices which have manifest effects over time (Butler, 1990, 1993a); to the performativity of metaphors, narratives, imaginaries in scientific practice (Fox Keller, 1995; Haraway, 1997; Suchman, 2006) and the performativity of discursive matter itself (Barad, 2007). In short, performativity refers to a range of generative mechanisms, technologies, and discourses, material and semiotic, that are often hidden, and that make the bodies, materials and worlds they produce appear natural within existing power structures or experimental parameters. The move from a performativity of discourse towards the performativity of experimentation is crucial for the thesis and transliteracy which enacts language not as a disembodied, discursive function but as a material *and* semiotic discursive structure (see case studies 2.3-2.3.3; 3.3-3.3.3).

Further, the thesis and transliteracy challenge the exceptional ontological status of language that sets it apart from other, material and semiotic meaning-making structures, including experimental apparatuses in science. The epitaph of this chapter is a quote by molecular biologist and historian of science Hans-Jörg Rheinberger which encapsulates the argument that there are no inherently different materialities, and diverse material-semiotic discourses, including language, work in conjuncture with each other. Similarly, Karen Barad argued that "agential realism circumvents the problem of different materialities" (2007, p. 192). "There is no mystery about how the materiality of language could ever possibly affect the materiality of the body" (ibid). According to these views, how differences between diverse materialities, words and other material and semiotic objects, and even disciplines are stabilised is subject to genealogical enquiry.

While the case study central to this chapter (2.3-2.3.3) foregrounds the displacement of language as a physical event and semiotic function, authorship and process, subjectivity and objectivity, and disciplinary contexts in transliteracy, it also anticipates the way in which transliteracy displaces the distinctions between practice and fictional content. In Chapter Three I will argue that postmodernist fictions, including Brigid Brophy's *In Transit* (1969/2002), tended to enact, not a dichotomy between language as a material event or signifying function (.v; also 1.2), but a correlative dichotomy between the 'real', natural world and the imaginary realm of fiction (3.1).

The performativity of experimentation has also inspired the way in which protagonist P.I. Belahg's investigation is recruited into a generative project in *Gaudy Bauble*. Reflecting my own practice and transliteracy, P.I. Belahg's search for two scriptwriters, Gotterbarm and Tulep, who went missing in *GB's Chapter 1. TULEP* (pp. 148-150), is significant in view of what it produces (its performative effects), rather than

in view of what the P.I. might discover.⁸³ P.I. Belahg's investigatory practices end up generating the material for film-maker Blulip's TV series, for example, instead of retrieving the original scriptwriters, Gotterbarm and Tulep. Whilst the effects of P.I. Belahg's investigation become increasingly significant, her findings are banal and satirised in the novella: in *Chapter 11. PRINCESS DIANA MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN*, for example, the P.I. detects that she *is* the co-author Gotterbarm who she has been looking for (p. 188). The *faux*-denouement of the novella (*Chapter 21. PLATZE, BO!*) stages the 'discovery' of the fact that the second AWOL co-author, Tulep, the budgerigar, has been in plain sight all along (p. 224). I will further discuss the generative investigation staged in *GB* (that is, the recruitment of a search into an ontological project) in Chapter Three in the context of postmodernist fictions that also experimented with ontological processes (McHale, 1987; Waugh, 1984).

GB enacts the performativity of experimentation as a proliferation of nonnormative characters, actors, or "crackpot a[n]ge[l](nt)s"⁸⁴ (p. 209), to use an expression from the novella. Each of *GB*'s chapters documents the emergence of another crackpot a[n]ge[l](nt), and that I have also termed "riffraff" (p. 164), "disenfranchised things" (p. 148), or " $\approx\Delta\approx$ " (p. 209, for example). These characters, phenomena, actors or

⁸³ The so-called shift from a representational to a performative idiom in science and technology studies since the late 1970s (Hacking, 1983; Pickering, 1997; Barad, 2007, for example) has influenced my method transliteracy, including how I have staged experimental practice in *GB*'s content. From these perspectives, the question can no longer be whether scientific knowledge represents the natural world accurately, or what hypothesis does an experiment test or verify, but rather what does the experiment afford and produce. For example, anthropologist of the body Annemarie Mol states that "knowledge is no longer a set of statements *about* reality or the world, it participates actively in its shaping in practice" (2001, p. 153).

⁸⁴ My neologism "a[n]ge[l](nt)" combines the words 'angel' (which picks up on one of *Gaudy Bauble*'s epigraphs, Jack Spicer's (1956/2008, p. 80) "[o]ne cannot, however, safely invent an angel") and 'agent' (emphasising the characters' agential capacity).

a[n]ge[l](nt)s are the results of P.I. Belahg, Blulip, Hilary, Bobàk et al.'s experimental activities as much as they are the results of my own experimental practice, transliteracy. This chapter offers a case study and analysis of one such nonnormative character and product of transliteracy, the Icy Pet (pp. 191-196), whose emergence and formation is staged in *Gaudy Bauble's Chapter 13* (2.3-2.3.3). Using the Icy Pet as an example, I will argue that *Gaudy Bauble's* characters, phenomena, actors or a[n]ge[l](nt)s transgress normative categorisation (2.1.1; also 2.3-2.3.3). They are subjective and objective, factual and fictional, material and semiotic, and real and surreal. Nonnormativity constitutes the basis for the queer avant-garde poetics which is in formation within *Gaudy Bauble*. I will further expand on what I mean by 'nonnormative' (2.1.1), and how nonnormativity was effected through transliteracy in the case study (2.3-2.3.3).

Finally, *Gaudy Bauble* was written following a so-called generative constraint: I have set myself the task to detect the most marginal actors on and beyond the page and make them relevant for the plot. I will develop my reasons for stipulating the particular constraint in 2.2 and 2.4.1. One of the key arguments will be that transliteracy complicates and even satirizes the simplistic antinomy of authorship and constraint-based process by specifying a constraint that explicitly enrolls the subjectivity of the author in the writing process (see 2.2; 2.3.1; and 2.3.2). I will conclude this chapter by arguing that I have stipulated a constraint that facilitates innovation, as opposed to uncreativity (2.4.1).

2.1 Agential networks, distributed forms of attention, and the subversion of narrative in *Gaudy Bauble*

Transliteracy builds on my long-term situated and embodied writing practice as a gender nonconforming, queer identified writer and nonnative English speaker.

Previously, I have experimented with the material and semiotic capacities of language to produce unpremeditated, experimental fictions (Waidner, 2010, 2011, 2015c, for example; see .iii). I recruited the perceived materiality, or otherness, of English to complicate normative versions of authorship, intentionality, process, and plot.

Transliteracy develops this practice significantly by extending agency (that is, the capacity to influence the narrative) across complex assemblages of diverse actors, and across method and content. Extending Latour (1987, 1999, for example) and others' use of the term, I use 'actor' to denote human and nonhuman, material and semiotic, linguistic and non-linguistic, and imaginary and real participants in action and process. These include, but are not limited to, myself, *GB*'s characters, and English, whose material *and* semiotic values have the capacity to co-shape the novella's plot.

The following case study (2.3-2.3.3) identifies the diverse actors on and beyond the page that, collided in experimental practice, engendered *Gaudy Bauble*'s Icy Pet character (pp. 191ff). To anticipate what I will develop below, the relevant actors and agencies that factor into the Icy Pet character include a fictional Art Deco tessellation design; the U.S. hardcore group *Pink and Brown*; polyester; two real-life, industrial acronyms ICI (for *Imperial Chemical Industries*) and PET (for polyethylene terephthalate); graphics by the Dutch artist M.C. Escher (1898-1972); science and technology studies and my commitment to the revitalization of subjugated narratives; myself as a former

musician and long-term employee in second hand record shops; myself as a practicing writer; protagonists P.I. Belahg, Blulip and Hilary's fears and anxieties as developed in *GB*'s earlier chapters (i.e. narrative context); and the fold-out sleeve of a 7 inch record I released in my previous life as a musician and the reactions it prompted in the past. Finally, the new character Icy Pet combined with a vaguely remembered picture of Loplop, Dadaist Max Ernst's (1891-1976) birdlike character that features in many of his collages and paintings, engenders yet another character, the *Mördervogel* (pp. 189-191).

Transliteracy proved effective when I have been able to detect and forge intelligible resonances and affinities between the ontologically diverse actors and realities that have constituted the various agential assemblages. The processes of practicing distributed forms of attention across writing method and subject matter, being attentive to resonances, and developing them into new characters are largely, but not comprehensively⁸⁵, enacted on the page in *GB*. These processes constitute the novella's narrative and subject matter (resulting in the aforementioned proliferation of " $\approx\Delta\approx$ " (pp. 209 ff)). I have found that the development of meaningful connections across complex agential assemblages produced a sense of causality in *GB* that is intelligible to the reader and even captivating, whilst radically subverting normative notions of plot, intentionality, causality, characterisation and authorship. I will elaborate on the strategies, capacities and archives I have employed in practice to facilitate and encourage the production of meaning across agential assemblages in the case study.

⁸⁵ Throughout the writing of *GB*, one of my concerns has been to produce a visually dense block of text, for example, that complements the aural and semiotic density of the novella. This has led to adjustments of the text during the writing process. For example, I might have replaced a longer word for a shorter word, as this increased the density of the automatically justified text. (A justified text is aligned evenly along the left and right margins of the page in Microsoft Word.) I will discuss further 'hidden' aspects of transliteracy in the chapter's conclusion (2.4).

2.1.1 Nonnormativity in *Gaudy Bauble*

One of the purposes of the case study is to show how specifically transgressive, queer, or what I have termed nonnormative characters emerge as products of experimental practice and transliteracy. Crucially, the diverse source materials (or actors) that constitute respective agential assemblages are transformed in experimental practice and transliteracy, and their prior categorisations no longer apply to the characters that emerge in *GB*. In other words, the diverse actors comprising each experimental assemblage emerge from the "mangle of practice", to use a term that science scholar Andrew Pickering (1997) coined in relation to scientific experimental practice, in an extremely mediated and transformed way. Cogent case studies have illustrated the argument that previously separate, ontologically differing realities or actors engage in a mutual process in experimentation in science from which they emerge transformed (Despret, 2008; Latour, 1987, 1999; Rheinberger, 1997, for example).⁸⁶ Transliteracy enacts this principle in *GB*.

For example, I have begun to develop a genre that I have termed agential realist fiction in *Gaudy Bauble*, and I will develop this term in Chapter Three. Agential realist fiction destabilises the distinction between realism and antirealism that arguably was enacted in postmodernist fictions (3.0; 3.1; 3.4; also Conclusion). *GB*'s characters cannot

⁸⁶ For example, philosopher of science Vincianne Despret (2008) showed how the experiment to teach a parrot to talk depended on the production of what she discussed as overlapping or shared interests and desires between the bird and psychologist Irene Pepperberg. Despret described the production of shared interests as an extensive and laborious process that involved, in view of the parrot, "*an extension of its subjectivity as 'parrot-with-human'*" (ibid, p. 128), and vice versa. Alex (1976-2007), the real-life talking parrot and subject of Despret's analysis, is one of the inspirations behind *GB*'s character Tulep, an untypical budgerigar. To view Alex, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_%28parrot%29 [accessed 2 April 2016].

be said simply to represent or symbolise an already existing entity in the world, but neither can they be said to be entirely fantastical. To anticipate an example which I will develop below (2.3.1), *Gaudy Bauble's* nonhuman character, the "pink, brown & coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation design" (p. 191) does not mimic or represent any one of M.C. Escher's lizard tessellations (Fig. 6), although M.C. Escher's lizard tessellations have co-inspired the writing process. Rather, M.C. Escher's tessellations entered into an agential assemblage, including as we shall see a punk band named *Pink and Brown*, a *p* alliteration, and a particular syntactical pattern that, collided with each other, engendered *GB's* unique, nonnormative "pink, brown & coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation design" (ibid). Many or even most fictions might incorporate autobiographical or factual elements, implicitly or explicitly (see Conclusion). But transliteracy does not simply add or combine ontologically diverse source materials, objective or subjective, factual, autobiographical or fictional, material or semiotic. Translitteracy mangles and transforms these distinct elements until they emerge as something completely different, and arguably new and innovative (see 2.4.1). Translitteracy is not additive, but transformative. The Icy Pet is neither factual (like M.C. Escher's lizard tessellations), nor autobiographical (a representation of my long-term minimum wage job), nor poetic or linguistic (*p* alliteration), nor musical (rhythmic). The Icy Pet is something else, an entity of agential realist fiction, or an a[n]ge[l](nt), $\approx \Delta \approx$, or character, and as such, nonnormative. I aim to evidence this claim in the following case study.

2.2 The constraint: capacitating marginal actors

My practice was further shaped according to a generative constraint. I have set myself the task to detect the most marginal, or not-yet, actors on and beyond the page and make them relevant for the plot. This conceptual apparatus is also reflected in *Gaudy Bauble's* subject matter: *Gaudy Bauble* stages what might happen if otherwise inconsequential and disenfranchised 'actors' or characters were allowed to become effectual and co-shape the narrative, rather than actions located within more conventional human protagonists. This constraint reflects my long-term commitment to working with and within what French philosopher Michel Foucault termed "subjugated knowledges" (1980, pp. 81-82). According to Foucault, these "low-ranking", "unqualified", and "popular" knowledges are located "beneath the level of scientificity" (ibid), and are often left out or ignored by mainstream perspectives (see also Halberstam, 2011). Shaped by its specific constraint, transliteracy mobilises these existing but marginal knowledges (and specifically what I have termed my personal, queer avant-garde archive (see .iii)), and puts them to work as part of an avant-garde writing practice (see 2.3-2.3.3).

The particular constraint I have stipulated consolidates the way in which transliteracy explicitly enrolls the subjectivity of the author, myself, in the writing process (2.3.1). As a distributed practice, transliteracy challenges more voluntarist forms of production such as creativity or expression, which are based on the idea of an artist or creator executing or articulating a certain content, without in any way eliding the subjectivity of the author. In the previous chapter, I have discussed how constraint-based writing is presumed to result in impersonal process as opposed to more subjective forms

of authorship in conceptual writing (1.2). This does not exhaust the nuanced field of conceptual writing, but for the purpose of this thesis I have identified this as one of the dominant debates that shape conceptual writing practices. The particular constraint I have chosen for writing *GB* complicates and satirizes the simplistic dichotomy between authorship and writing process. Specifically, the constraint relies on the subjective ability to establish, identify, detect or invent what I have termed the least likely actor(s) within any emerging agential constellation.

The detection of the otherwise unspecified 'most marginal actor' within an experimental assemblage whose limits are subject to authorial fancy (or imaginary capacity) appears to be arbitrary, a subjective choice. Practically anything or nothing could be a marginal, or not-yet, actor. The constraint that shaped my practice appears to be a *faux*-constraint.⁸⁷ However, the constraint is less lax, or *faux*, than at first it might appear. Not all vaguenesses, nothingnesses or not-yet actors 'work' and become meaningful within a specific agential assemblage. Not every agential constellation gels and proves performative in terms of generating meaningful plots and narratives. My experiments with transliteracy have produced a large amount of scrap materials.⁸⁸ With

⁸⁷ Arguably, most canonical constraint-led texts are *faux*-systematic, *faux*-conceptual, or 'soft' conceptual. Consider Georges Perec's *A Void* (1969), the lipogrammatic novel written without the letter e; or Anne Garréta's *Sphinx* (1986/2015), written without using any gender markers; or Peter Jaeger's *540493390 (research)* (2015), a book of prose in which the number of lines on each page were determined by an online number generator; or Christian Bök's *Eunoia* (2001a), all of which entail a significant amount of authorial leeway or freedom. In 1.2, I have argued that all conceptual writing strategies might be seen to exceed the provocative, hyperbolic dichotomy between authorship and process which is derived from the premise of uncreativity.

⁸⁸ Over the course of this research project, I have produced materials at least four times the length of the novella, including perfectly functioning scenes that did not advance the overarching narrative. Ultimately, the main challenge has been to make *Gaudy Bauble's* respective and unpremeditated chapters further the overriding narrative once it began to transpire.

increasing practice, however, I have been able to make almost all agential assemblages I have curated in *GB* relate intelligibly, which is prerequisite for the version of plot I have pursued through transliteracy (see 2.1).

Shaped by the specific constraint, transliteracy depends on the writer's ability to register or invent nothingnesses, vaguenesses, inklings, whims, fancies or not-yet actors that have the capacity to connect in a meaningful way within the wider agential arrangement and to generate intelligible content. As I will argue in the following case study, the production of meaningful connections between diverse marginal actors presupposes the availability of an extensive archive of such marginal actors: figures, literatures, facts and imaginaries rooted in what I have termed a queer avant-garde context, practice and life (.iii); and also an embodied susceptibility and affinity to (potentially significant) marginal actors shaped over time by my personal situatedness as a marginal writer myself (.iv). Writing *Gaudy Bauble*, I have further developed the ability to register, imagine and integrate marginal actors into diverse agential assemblages that might gel and generate surprising and meaningful plots and content.

One of *Gaudy Bauble*'s objectives has been to extend conceptual writing strategies through more embodied epistemologies, and the specificity and situatedness of transliteracy is symptomatic of this. Rather than elide or pretend to eliminate subjectivity, I have explored what it might mean to "recruit and enrol subjectivity in the experimental apparatus" (Blackman, 2014, p. 370). In her article on Gertrude Stein's (1874-1946) experiments on automatic writing conducted in William James's Harvard Psychology Laboratory, cultural theorist Lisa Blackman argues that Stein's particular subjectivity, as avant-garde writer and 'queer subject', was central to the experimental apparatus's efficacy (ibid). Blackman shows that the experiments conducted required

Stein to participate “in certain processes of transformation by attuning to what it might be possible to achieve through active engagement with the affordances of the experimental apparatus” (p. 377). Blackman points out that it was difficult for other experimental subjects to replicate the experience produced within the apparatus, suggesting that Stein herself was an integral part of the experimental apparatus (see also Meyer, 2001). Far from seeing the specificity of transliteracy as problematic, then, I argue that the production of innovative texts depends on the integration of subjectivity and, specifically, marginal and nonnormative subjectivities, in experimental writing practices (2.4.1). I will evidence this claim in the following case study.

2.3 The case study: how transliteracy shaped *Gaudy Bauble's* Icy Pet

Gaudy Bauble's Chapter 13 begins with a detailed description of a "pink, brown & coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation design" (p. 191). An unlikely star, perhaps, the Art Deco pattern constitutes *Chapter 13's* first marginal, nonhuman actor and character. The reader learns that the design is depicted on a carpet covering the floor in a waiting room. As soon as the Art Deco tessellation design became the prominent actor and narrative driving force of the scene, I syphoned agency away from it and onto a previously insignificant and even unmentioned actor, the carpet's polyester material. The narrative now concentrates on the carpet's material, a rare prototype of polyester. Two acronyms, ICI (for *Imperial Chemical Industries*) and PET (for Polyethylene terephthalate) appear during the recapitulation of the history of polyester, and the invented history of "proto-polyester" (p. 192). The combined acronyms ICI PET, a semiotic fluke, now garner agency. Mediated within the structures of the wider agential assemblage, the name Icy

Pet brings into being what it names. The evocative denotation of the combined acronyms ICI PET (*icy pet*, a frozen animal), refracted through the Art Deco tessellation design and other realities on and beyond the page, give the new character her particular shape and specificity (see 2.3.2). I reprint the beginning of *Chapter 13. ICI PET* below, which is the subject of the following analysis.

The pink, brown and coffee-cream peony pattern was based on an Art Deco tessellation design. Various shaped straight-edged pink petals clustered around coffee-cream reproductive centres into four variations of a peony flower. Various shaped straight-edged coffee-cream petals clustered around pink reproductive centres into four spectrally inverted variations of a peony flower. The pink/coffee-cream and coffee-cream/pink peonies were arranged and replicated across the polyester carpet in such a way that the brown interspaces between individual peonies added up to a straight-edged multi-lizard-shaped labyrinth, sinkhole or sewer. In addition to that, the coffee-cream elements added up to a quasi-SOS in 2D, a Morse code distress signal smeared across polyester.

The carpet had always covered the waiting room floor and was integral to the ethos and the aesthetics of *Dental Repair Shop Rocky Bobák*. It shaped its collective imaginary. It also needed replacing. It had needed replacing since circa 1975. The window however in which to replace it had closed. In 1976 the carpet had been included in the English Heritage Statutory List of Structures of Special Interest on grounds of not the Art Deco *pièce unique*, but the material depicting it. Pivotal positioned within the history of industrial innovations, Bobák's floor-covering was not your average Axminster but a rare polyester prototype produced in 1939. Polyester had not been officially invented until 1941, when PolyEthylene Terephthalate (PET) had been patented in Britain. PET had formed the basis of *Terylene*[®], the first synthetic fibre to be commercially manufactured by Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI). PET, ICI. Icy pet. But not yet. The prototypical exemplar of PET had been put forward by a West-Indian chemical laboratory in 1939. A Western rival laboratory however had persuaded the scientific community that the West-Indian innovation was carcinogenic. Derivative of a previous failure, failure for all sorts of reasons. The rival had ended up patenting their identical version of PET, but not

until 1941, two years later. Delaying Icy Pet. They delay/I delay Icy Pet. Has it been said that the pink/brown and coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation pattern in proto-polyester produced yet another figure in *Vogelperspektive*? A larger figure. Dadaist, even. The *König der Vögel*, a large-bodied turkeyheader, reared her head over so many pink-brown-and-coffee-cream peonies that crowded like individual organs around and within her. Carrying the air and skin-tone of a turkey in the freezer compartment, the original Icy Pet held her head up and raised her arms in defiance. This was *der König der Vögel*, the Icy Pet, or her of the priceless pink-brown-and-coffee-cream polyester polyphony" (pp. 191-192).

The analysis illustrates how transliteracy engendered *GB*'s narrative by producing performative agential assemblages, that is, agential assemblages that gel in ways that are intelligible to the reader. The Icy Pet takes shape via several precedent characters, or 'sub-actors'. Closely following the novella's narrative progression, I will discuss the carpet's Art Deco tessellation design initially (2.3.1). I will then discuss the material of which the carpet is made, a particular prototype of polyester (2.3.2). These sub-actors themselves incorporate several overlapping interest, affinities and agencies which have shaped their specific effectiveness in terms of the Icy Pet.

2.3.1 The pink, brown & coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation design

For the purpose of this analysis, I have identified several distinct agencies that, collided, engendered the specific Art Deco design in Gaudy Bauble: the U.S. hardcore group *Pink and Brown*; the Dutch artist M.C. Escher's lizard tessellation designs; myself in my capacities as a former worker in record shops, a former musician, and practicing writer; and the alliterative possibilities of 'pink peony pattern', 'petals', and 'polyester' (p. 191). I

will emphasise the way in which these diverse source materials are transformed rather than combined in experimental practice until a new nonnormative character, the pink, brown & coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation design, emerges.

'Pink and brown' appeared in an earlier draft of *GB* in the shape of a 'Pink and Brown Writers Collective'. In another draft, a character wearing a brown uniform drove a pink Citroën estate car. For the purpose of this analysis, I was able to trace my seemingly random preoccupation with pink and brown. For some years, I have been aware of a U.S. hardcore band on the *Kill Rock Stars* label⁸⁹ of the same name, *Pink and Brown* (Fig. 5). I'm not a fan. Pink and brown, the consequential word couplet, and my cultivated affinity and working relationship with it, are traceable within my own situated context and background, having worked in second hand record shops between 2000 and 2010. This context provided the unusual scenario of regular exposure to obscure artists and bands that I might not have otherwise paid attention to, or even liked. Transliteracy recruits subjectivity in ways that are entirely different to lyrical expression, sentimentality, and (voluntarist, mainstream notions of) intentionality. Only on reflection and as part of this analysis was I able to track 'pink & brown' back to my former work and the band, and this connotation and origin is unlikely to be available to the reader. I have argued that transliteracy depends on a writer's disposability of an extensive avant-garde archive of queer figures, literatures and influences, and 'pink and brown' is a first example of this.

⁸⁹ <http://www.killrockstars.com/> [accessed 2 April 2016]



Fig. 5: U.S. hardcore band Pink and Brown (circa 1993-1999)

In practice, pink and brown became the "pink, brown and coffee-cream peony pattern" (p. 191) that opens *Chapter 13*. As discussed throughout this thesis, transliteracy enacts language as an active agent whose material and semiotic values have the capacity to affect the narrative. Inflected through my preference for a particular rhythmic structure, the original 'pink and brown', through the addition of the two syllable adjective 'coffee-cream', became 'pink, brown and coffee-cream' (duh, duh, du-, duh duh duh). In 2003, I came to writing as a former musician, and what I have referred to as a preference for a particular rhythmic structure might have been shaped over two decades, playing in experimental/improv Indie groups⁹⁰. On this basis, my preference for a rhythm might be less arbitrary than at first it might appear, which provides further evidence for my argument that transliteracy and arguably all avant-garde writing practices are situated (see also 1.3). Further, an alliterative possibility determined the *peony* design of the *pink* (brown and coffee-cream) *pattern*. The carpet's *polyester* material might derive from the

⁹⁰ <https://waidner.org/music/> [accessed 20 April 2016]

same impetus. This example demonstrates how transliteracy displaces the dichotomy between language as matter and language as a signifying function re-produced in conceptual writing, for example (Chapter One; also .v).

Dutch artist M.C. Escher's lizard tessellation designs also factored into my own pink, brown & coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation design. Between 1937 and 1965, Escher produced over a hundred variations of lizard tessellations (as well as birds, fishes, and Pegasusses, for example). Fig. 6 pictures Escher's (1956) *Lizards (No. 101)*. The hardcore band *Pink and Brown*, as part of a wider agential assemblage, factored into *Gaudy Bauble's* plot in an extremely mediated way. Inflected through a preference for a rhythmic pattern and alliteration, 'pink and brown' became something else, namely a pink, brown and coffee-cream peony pattern. Similarly, *GB's* tessellation design does not simply mimic or represent Escher's lizards. Rather, Escher's lizards became part of a wider assemblage of diverse actors that ultimately engendered *GB's* Art Deco pattern. Escher's lizards as depicted in Fig. 6 are quite different from *GB's* Art Deco tessellation design. They are red, black and greyish-coffee-cream, for example, rather than pink, brown and coffee-cream. Further, the depicted design (Fig. 6) tessellates one geometric shape, a lizard shape, that morphs throughout the design. *Gaudy Bauble's* tessellation, on the other hand, incorporates two geometric shapes at least. Escher's lizards reappear as the interspaces between peony flowers in *GB's* novel design. 'Mangling' pink and brown, Escher's vaguely remembered lizards, a rhythmic structure, an alliteration, and an uncanny atmosphere I developed in the preceding narrative ("the coffee-cream elements added up to a quasi-SOS in 2D, a Morse code distress signal smeared across polyester" (p. 191)) engendered the category-defying, expressive and procedural, subjective and objective, factual and fictional, material and semiotic, real and surreal pink, brown and

coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation design. This is a nonnormative character and product of transliteracy, derived from my subjective, situated context which ultimately exceeds whatever authorial intentions, imaginaries or aspirations I might have had prior to the writing process.



Fig. 6: MC Escher, Lizards (No. 101), 1956, Ink, Pencil, Watercolor

2.3.2 Proto-polyester: googling as a strategy

Continuing to follow the narrative, this section extends my analysis by incorporating the polyester material depicting the Art Deco tessellation design. Polyester, collided with the Art Deco pattern, *einer Vogelperspektive*⁹¹ (a bird's eye view), a creature depicted on a significant record sleeve, and the literal denotation of two combined acronyms, ICI and PET (an Icy Pet might be a frozen animal), engendered the Icy Pet character in its queer specificity.

According to the novella, the relevant carpet "had been included in the English Heritage Statutory List of Structures of Special Interest on grounds of not the Art Deco *pièce unique*, but the material depicting it" (p. 192). The sentence marks the deliberate shift of attention from the Art Deco pattern and onto a previously neglected actor, polyester. According to transliteracy and the particular constraint it entails, I diverted agency away from the Art Deco pattern as soon as it started to dominate the narrative. Arguably, polyester had been implicated in *Chapter 13*'s narrative from the beginning as the unmentioned material depicting the pattern. It had not played a significant role until I specifically sought out a marginal actor. The narrative now develops polyester's real-life, allegedly factual but unverified history as provided by Google, and a fictionalised extension of this history, inspired by arguments that official histories of scientific innovations are shaped by imperialist and patriarchal bias (Fox Keller, 1995; Harding, 1986; Latour, 1987; Mayberry et al., 2001, for example).⁹²

⁹¹ I have argued that I have employed sporadic German expressions, terms and phrases in my fictions so as to produce for the reader some of the semiotic blind spots or ambiguities I routinely experience as a nonnative English speaker (.v).

⁹² Bruno Latour (1987), for example, has shown how the production of a scientific fact depends on a scientist or laboratory's capacity to persuade the scientific community,

"Pivotally positioned within the history of industrial innovations, Bobák's floor-covering was not your average Axminster but a rare polyester prototype produced in 1939. Polyester had not been officially invented until 1941, when PolyEthylene Terephthalate (PET) had been patented in Britain. PET had formed the basis of Terylene®, the first synthetic fibre to be commercially manufactured by Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI). PET, ICI. Icy pet" (p. 192). As evidenced in the preceding passage, the Icy Pet 'begins' suddenly, in the space of three sentences. However, it takes several pages for the new character to take shape in its specificity and within its wider context.

The acronyms ICI and PET, for *Imperial Chemical Industries* and PolyEthylene Terephthalate respectively, are real, factual. They refer to the historical British chemical company⁹³ and the ubiquitous polymer resin⁹⁴. The fact that the polyester Terylene® was the "first synthetic fibre to be commercially manufactured by Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI)" (p. 192) is also 'true', according to [whatispolyester.com](http://www.whatispolyester.com).⁹⁵ I have garnered these facts 'researching' polyester and its history on the internet. In order to divert agency away from the Art Deco pattern and towards the previously marginal

rather than experimental evidence. The capacity to persuade, in turn, derives from personal status, authority, reputation, education, patronage, in other words subjectivity as rooted in race, class, gender and sexuality. *GB*'s proto-polyester storyline foregrounds a subjugated narrative, that is, a narrative marginalised as a result of the aforesaid mechanisms. The storyline that "[t]he prototypical exemplar of PET had been put forward by a West-Indian chemical laboratory in 1939" (p. 50), two years prior to a Western rival laboratory's being credited with its invention, is fictional but plausible within the aforesaid critiques. This subplot does not directly factor into the Icy Pet character which I discuss in this case study. However, the accentuation of subjugated stories and agencies is part of the ethos that shaped my practice and that is embodied in the Icy Pet.

⁹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Chemical_Industries [accessed 1 April 2016]

⁹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyethylene_terephthalate [accessed 1 April 2016]

⁹⁵ <http://www.whatispolyester.com/history.html>, heading "PET & Terylene" [accessed 1 April 2016]

actor 'polyester', I googled search items including 'polyester', 'Wikipedia polyester', 'history of polyester', 'invention of polyester'. It was not my intention to document reliable facts about real-life polyester, but rather to allow an intelligible marginal actor, polyester, to factor into the narrative in significant ways. Googling, I sought to detect 'something' that might resonate with parts of the already existing text. From scores of Google results, I gleaned the surprise merger of two suggestive acronyms, ICI and PET. They provided an evocative name for a new character, the Icy Pet, hence a focus for the evolving plot.

I have employed googling as a strategy throughout writing *GB*. Googling extends my queer avant-garde archive of marginal figures, facts and literatures beyond my long-term knowledge, autobiographical fragments, my immediate, physical context, and my imaginary capacities. Increasing the archive or pool of marginal actors increases the likelihood of fluke resonances and affinities between them, which in return facilitates the formation of performative agential assemblages in transliteracy. However, the ability to register potentially generative resonances in agential assemblages (and even the ability to register marginal actors through googling) remains tied to my subjective positioning as a marginal, queer writer myself.⁹⁶ Transliteracy not only depends on the availability of a queer avant-garde archive, but also the expertise, situatedness and experiencedness of a writer to navigate and transform the archive. As evidenced in the example above, I incorporated Google results most effectively when I collided them with more long-term knowledges and vested influences. To give further examples, *Chapter 9. COLT* (pp. 179-182) develops the eponymous character, Colt, as a scientific test animal belonging to the

⁹⁶ I do not consider transliteracy a digital writing method as such, and I have not explored transliteracy's relation to digital writing methods in this thesis. Transliteracy as a digitally extended method is something I will develop in future research practices.

maverick dental technician Rocky Bobák. Googling produced the fact that tooth development (odontogenesis) entails the so-called sonic hedgehog gene⁹⁷, which established Colt's species: Colt is a hedgehog-like sea urchin. The text makes the link explicit, stating that "German for 'sea urchin' is 'Seeigel' which literally translates as 'sea hedgehog'" (p. 180). The performativity of the Google result (its capacity to co-effect) is also enacted in *GB's* narrative more directly. In *Chapter 2. TRACEY BIRYUKOV LULIP*, for example, Blulip googles lines from Gotterbarm's script: "Based on lines such as 'Hoofed Bird Of The Isle Of Dogs' (Gotterbarm, 201x), Blulip had Google-searched 'Hoofed Bird', or 'Hoofed Budgerigar'" (p. 153). Blulip's search results in her purchasing a host of animal sculptures. The Google results manifest, almost literally, in this episode. Further examples of Google results factoring into *GB's* narrative include the real life dental practice Dr. Gotterbarm (p. 174); the news story of the tourist who joined the search party for herself that features in *Chapter 11. PRINCESS DIANA MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN*, leading to P.I. Belahg concluding that she herself must be the AWOL author Gotterbarm (pp. 187 ff)⁹⁸; the chemical formula of gold, pictured as *fig. iv* on p. 178, which to me evoked a "butch ballerina performing an arabesque" (ibid). As a long-term follower of the queer performance group *Split Britches'* work (see also .iii; and Conclusion), any arabesque would have reminded me the transgender arabesque they performed in their play *Lust and Comfort* (Shaw, Weaver, Kennerly, 1995), and which inspired *Chapter 10. THE GOLDSEXUAL STATUETTE* (pp. 182-187).

To resume my analysis of *Chapter 13's* Icy Pet, now that she has her name, the Icy Pet has yet to take shape in her situated context. Over the novella's following two pages,

⁹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonic_hedgehog [accessed 1 April 2016]

⁹⁸ <http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/369414/Missing-woman-joins-search-party-looking-for-herself> [accessed 1 April 2016]

she gradually emerges as yet another figure in (and of) the carpet⁹⁹, retrospectively complicating the impossible tessellation design further still. "Has it been said that the pink, brown and coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation pattern in proto-polyester produced yet another figure in *Vogelperspektive*?" (p. 192) At first, the Icy Pet appears from *Vogelperspektive*. Bird's-eye view is a perspective yet to be determined within the semiotically already over-determined Art Deco pattern. Is the premise of a *bird's-eye* view suggestive enough to effect the emergent character's bird-like development? Clearly, it is. The previously indeterminate Icy Pet emerges as a bird-like figure, a "large-bodied turkeyheader" (ibid), or the "*König der Vögel*"¹⁰⁰ (ibid). Apart from the bird connotation in *bird's-eye* view, *Vogelperspektive*, another impetus pushes the Icy Pet's specific development and bird-like orientation. Her name: *Icy. Pet*. In *GB*, everything has the capacity to acquire agency and become performative within its respective agential context. Going back to performativity's origins within linguistics, names have the capacity to bring into being what they name (Austin, 1962; also Butler, 1990). The Icy Pet's *iciness*, combined with her pink, brown & coffee-cream "skin-tone"¹⁰¹ (p. 192), suggested a "turkey in the freezer compartment" (ibid). To my mind, a frozen turkey was and is the most obvious 'icy pet' with a pinkish/coffee-cream skin tone. Hence, the Icy

⁹⁹ One obvious association I was unable to make effective in this assemblage of meaning was Henry James' (1896) short story *The Figure in the Carpet*: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Figure_in_the_Carpet [accessed 1 April 2016]. Arguably, this link might be obvious to a literary scholar or a writer shaped within a more traditional literary context, and the Chapter might have taken a different direction. Personally, I was made aware of the connection by a reader, only after I had written the scene. This detail illustrates the fact that transliteracy's specific efficacy varies according to a writer's subjectivity.

¹⁰⁰ *Transl.*: King of birds

¹⁰¹ The Icy Pet and her complexion, apparently, are already defined by the pink, brown and coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation design she is part of.

Pet was becoming increasingly turkey-like.¹⁰²

Finally, *qua* turkey, the Icy Pet evoked this: Fig. 7. Fig. 7 depicts the fold-out sleeve of the 7 inch single *L.O.V.E./NOTHING* (Waidner, Matthews, & Hiratsuka, 2003) by the U.K. Indie band *Klang*, released on *Rough Trade/For Us* record label.¹⁰³ With Donna Matthews and Keisuke Hiratsuka, I formed and played in *Klang* between 2001-2004. Arguably, the *L.O.V.E.* bird's head and neck are vulture-like, but on cue 'turkey', she sprang to my mind inevitably. The Icy Pet gained further specificity, arriving at "large-bodied turkeyheader" (p. 192), who, like the *L.O.V.E.*-bird, "raised her arms in defiance" (ibid). See Fig. 7.

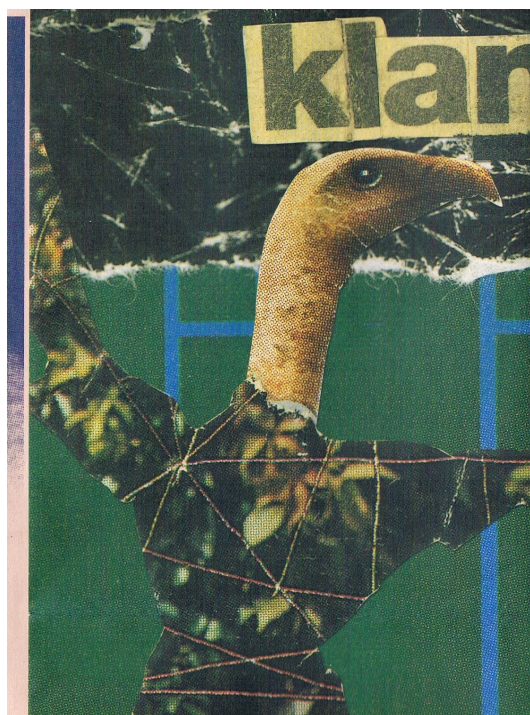


Fig. 7: *L.O.V.E./NOTHING* (*Klang*, 2003). 7-inch record. Fold-out poster sleeve.

¹⁰² *GB's Chapter 15. PAINLEVÉ HYPERCAMP & AXOLOTTL* (pp. 56-63) provides another example of a name co-effecting what it names in *GB*. The character Painlevé Hypercamp is the hybrid character who emerged from a reference to the French filmmaker and biologist, Jean Painlevé (1902-1989), and the French word for seahorse, *hippocampe* (pp. 57-58). Painlevé Hypercamp, the name, effects what it names, engendering an outrageously (hyper)camp drag persona and character. This example will be developed in 3.3.1 as part of my discussion of nonbinary genders in *GB*.

¹⁰³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVUnPav6Ky0> [accessed 1 April 2016]

2.3.3 The Icy Pet as an actor: towards the *Mördervogel*¹⁰⁴

In the subsequent narrative, the fully developed Icy Pet becomes an actor herself. Like the Art Deco tessellation pattern and polyester, the Icy Pet plays a part in the proliferations of further characters, actors or a[n]ge[l](nt)s, specifically the *Mördervogel*. The Icy Pet's irrepressible agency is expressed as her "pushing her defiant agenda" (p. 193). Also, the "merciless Icy Pet showed her coffee-creamed features and body in polyester, commencing her intervention" (p. 194). Bruno Latour (1987; also Rheinberger, 1997) argued that once a new actor has been stabilised in experimental practice in the sciences, it will be integrated in future experimental systems and impact on future generations of scientific objects.¹⁰⁵ This version of causality and continuity has inspired how I have progressed from one chapter (or character) to the next.

Collided with the human protagonists Belahg, Blulip, Hilary and Bobàk's histories, fears, and bereavement developed in the preceding chapters, and their eagerness to collate and relate their experiences (pp. 194 ff), the Icy Pet as part of a new agential assemblage engenders and co-defines the emergent *Mördervogel* character. The *Mördervogel* might be a more sinister version of the Icy Pet. It is difficult to tell where the Icy Pet ends and the *Mördervogel* begins. The *Mördervogel* is the Icy Pet inflected through death, potentially murder (relating to *GB*'s precedent *Chapter 12. MÖRDERVERGEL*, pp. 189-191); the frightening sound of a bird's flapping wings during a midnight recce (p. 190); a recurrent incantation intended to subdue the proactive Icy Pet ("Peony, peony,

¹⁰⁴ *Transl.*: Murderbird, or murdering bird

¹⁰⁵ In the sciences, stabilised objects normally become 'blackboxed', i.e. the processes of their construction become obscured and forgotten (Latour, 1987, for example). On the contrary, *GB* is an account of these processes of construction and the workings of transliteracy are largely enacted on the page.

lizardine interference. Pink, brown and coffee-cream poly-reality..." (p. 194)); Hilary's fear of insanity (see *Chapter 5. HILARY PARK*); and Dadaist Max Ernst's (1891-1976) figure Loplop: "Like Max Ernst's Loplop, or, come to think of it, the very coffee-cream Icy Pet there, the faceless flapper had had multiple tentacles terminating in hands with balloony digits. Newfangled strangle instruments, Blulip intimated. Killing machines. Also flight-enabling, dual functional. What?! Murder flutterer, *Mördervogel*. She probably done it" (ibid). Lending "balloony digits" (see Fig. 8) to the *Mördervogel*, Loplop had been waiting to infiltrate *Gaudy Bauble* since the *Klang* vulture had been co-inspiring the Icy Pet. In 2003, a perceived similarity between the creature depicted on the *L.O.V.E.* record's sleeve and Loplop was regularly commented upon.



Fig. 8: Loplop Introduces Loplop (Max Ernst, 1930, oil and various materials on wood)

2.4 Conclusion

In this Chapter and case study I have argued that transliteracy as an avant-garde writing method with a queer orientation displaces the presumed dichotomies between authorship and process, intentionality and automaticity, fact and fiction, language as a material event and a semiotic function, and method and content. *Chapter 13's* Icy Pet emerged via a complex material-semiotic assemblage of diverse actors that included M.C. Escher's lizards; the U.S. hardcore band *Pink and Brown*; a *faux*-subjugated-history of "proto-polyester" inspired by STS critiques of scientific imperialism; the history of polyester according to Google; alliteration; the rhythm of language; and myself, for example. Practicing more distributed forms of attention, I have mined this agential assemblage for resonances and affinities so that it might gel intelligibly, and engender a subverted version of a plot and meaningful content. I will reiterate that the Icy Pet does not look like the *L.O.V.E.* bird (Fig. 7), nor does the *Mördervogel* look like Loplop (Fig. 8), and Bobàk's Art Deco tessellation design looks nothing like Escher's lizards (Fig. 6). *L.O.V.E.* bird, Loplop and Escher's lizards constituted respectively one of multiple actors or agencies that, collided, engendered the Icy Pet, the *Mördervogel*, and Bobàk's Art Deco tessellation design. Like all characters, crackpot a[n]ge[l](nt)s, $\approx\Delta\approx$, or riffraff that populate *GB*, the Icy Pet and the *Mördervogel* are characterised by their nonnormativity. They cannot be categorised according to the actors and influences that shaped them. Nonnormativity provides the basis from which I have pursued the queer avant-garde poetics which is in formation in *GB*. Science scholar Ian Hacking has shown that a chief role for experimentation in science is the creation of phenomena that "did not hitherto exist in a pure state in the universe" (1983, p. xiii). The Icy Pet as developed in *GB* and

through transliteracy might be one such unique and unprecedented phenomenon, an *innovative* phenomenon produced through experimentation in fiction, albeit on an extremely modest scale.

To a large extent, *GB*'s reader is privy to the processes that engendered the Icy Pet, for example, as they are staged in, and constitute, the novella's narrative. However, certain aspects of the writing process and transliteracy remain obscure. For example, *GB*'s reader does not learn about my existing interest in M.C. Escher's designs, nor about my awareness of the band *Pink and Brown*. Neither are explicitly mentioned in the novella. Transliteracy is a complex embodied practice, and my own awareness of the writing process increased significantly as a result of this analysis. Were I to redraft *GB*'s *Chapter 13* post-analysis, I would be able explicitly to integrate and make effective several previously undeveloped or latent influences, connections and 'marginal' actors, for example *Pink and Brown*, the band, or their outfits (Fig. 5). Also, the analysis remains partial. I was able to identify and discuss the most prominent marginal actors (paradoxically), on and off the page, that co-shaped the content of *Chapter 13*. More nuanced actors and agencies have escaped and exceeded the discussion. They include the visual shape or outline of the text as a surface or body. Throughout the writing of *GB*, I have preferred shorter rather than longer words as this strategy helped to produce a dense block of justified text in my chosen Big Caslon font. For the same purpose, I have decided to single-space consecutive lines. The visual density of a block of text complements the aural and semiotic density of *GB*, and this reflects the agential density of the novella that arguably underpins its queer avant-garde poetics. In addition to that, avant-garde literature books published before ca. 1980 inspired this layout.

2.4.1 Revitalising literary innovation

In Chapter One I have argued that I share with conceptual writing a basic orientation towards process (and towards challenging more conventional modes of authorship such as lyrical expression), and working with language as a material substance. However, I do not share conceptual writing's project of uncreativity which derives, I argued, from disciplinary introspection (see 1.2). From these perspectives, uncreativity (Goldsmith, 2008) might be seen to be the most avant-garde and provocative gesture for experimental writing (1.2). Transliteracy was shaped within interdisciplinary perspectives and by the assumption that imaginaries, fantasies, and fictions are (causally) entangled with reality and materiality (1.4.4). From these perspectives, fictions have the potential to co-shape 'reality', materiality, actions, and even influence what comes to be scientific fact. Transliteracy is shaped by the objective to produce radically nonnormative imaginaries and fictions as part of a wider progressive political project to effect social change. This objective situates my work within a long-term avant-garde tradition (see Wark, 2011, for example, for a related discussion about the continuing relevance of the Situationist International's strategies in a contemporary sociopolitical context).

In this chapter, I have argued that the specific constraint (which stipulated that the most marginal actors are registered and made significant for the plot) has been shaped by my objective to complicate and extend conceptual writing strategies that reproduce a dichotomy between authorship and process-led forms of writing; and my commitment to revitalising subjugated knowledges (2.2). Further, the constraint has been inspired by interdisciplinary perspectives that have reconsidered what it might mean to innovate in experimental practice in science (Rheinberger, 1997, 2011; Latour, 1987, 1999). The microbiologist and historian of science Hans-Jörg Rheinberger has argued

that the purpose of experimentation in the sciences is to generate unprecedented events which by their very nature of being new cannot be anticipated in advance (1997, p. 36; see also Hacking, 1983). Specifically, he argued that “experimental systems are ... shrewd arrangements and sites of emergence, which we thought up, in order to catch what we cannot think up” (Rheinberger, 2013, p. 145, my translation).¹⁰⁶ He further states that “we don't exactly know what we don't know” (p. 146, my translation).¹⁰⁷ Rheinberger coined the term ‘epistemic thing’ to denote an emergent object in the experimental sciences, an “amalgam of halfway-concepts, no-longer-techniques, and not-yet-values-and-standards” (1997, p. 36). He writes that “[e]pistemic things present themselves in a characteristic, irreducible vagueness. This vagueness is inevitable because, paradoxically, “epistemic things embody what one does not yet know” (Rheinberger, 1997, p. 28). Like marginal or not-yet actors in transliteracy, epistemic things have the potential to become meaningful in a wider agential assemblage. According to this and similar perspectives (for example, Latour, 1999, pp. 116ff)¹⁰⁸, innovation in the sciences necessarily involves a commitment, willingness, situatedness and honed capacity to attune to vaguenesses, nothingnesses, barely formed epistemic things, or not-yet actors, and a commitment to devising methodologies that facilitate

¹⁰⁶ *Orig.*: “Experimentalsysteme sind also äußerst trickreiche Anlagen, man muss sie als Orte der Emergenz ansehen, als Strukturen, die wir uns ausgedacht haben, um nicht Ausdenkbares einzufangen. ... Es muss sich in ihnen etwas verfangen können, von dem man nicht genau weiß, was es ist.”

¹⁰⁷ *Orig.*: “Das Grundproblem besteht darin, dass man nicht genau weiss, was man nicht weiss.”

¹⁰⁸ In *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*, Latour (1999) analyses a series of 19th Century experiments conducted by chemist, microbiologist and discoverer of microbial fermentation Louis Pasteur (1822-1895). Latour argues that the new nonhuman, the microbial ‘lactic acid ferment’, emerged in a series of experiments as a range of mere attributes and actions initially, via a fragile character with vague and indeterminate boundaries (“a grey substance”, according to Pasteur), and finally as a full-blown actor and *origin* of the actions (1999, p. 116ff).

their emergence and their becoming significant. It may well be true that uncreativity in conceptual writing is achieved by the author stepping back and letting the machine run its course (Goldsmith, 2005). Queer avant-garde fiction, I argue, is another story altogether. The recruitment of subjectivity, and marginal subjectivities in particular, is prerequisite for the production of unprecedented texts and fictions, hence for revitalising the innovative potential of avant-garde literature.

Chapter Three

Agential Realist Fiction: Nonconforming Sexes and Genders in Brigid Brophy's *In Transit* (1969/2002) and *Gaudy Bauble*

3.0 Introduction: *Gaudy Bauble* as a development of postmodernist fiction

This chapter situates transliteracy and *Gaudy Bauble* [GB] as a development of postmodernist fictions which have experimented with the material *and* semiotic values of language in the past. Fictions such as Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote, which was a Dream* (1986); Christine Brooke-Rose's *Out* (1964/2006); Julio Cortázar's *62: A Model Kīt* (1968); Eugene Ionesco's plays, including *Amédée, or How to Get Rid of It* (1954); Ann Quin's *Tripticks* (1972/2002); Fran Ross's *Oreo* (1974/2015); and Stefan Themerson's *The Mystery of the Sardine* (1986), for example, have produced radically innovative imaginaries and worlds and they have influenced my long-term practice. Specifically, the first part of the chapter discusses U.K. novelist Brigid Brophy's (1929-1995) *In Transit* (1969/2002) as an example of postmodernist fiction¹⁰⁹, and a close reference point, precedent and

¹⁰⁹ For the purpose of situating my practice within literary trends and traditions, I have gathered together these diverse fictions under the term postmodernist fictions. Arguably, *In Transit* cannot be easily categorised as either an example of late modernism nor early postmodernism. I have opted for postmodernist fiction on the grounds of *In Transit*'s construction of a radically innovative world, imaginaries and narratives, which arguably is symptomatic for postmodernist fictions and also GB. Literary scholar Chris Hopkins

inspiration to *Gaudy Bauble*. *In Transit* has been described as a “riot of multilingual puns ... and linguistic high jinks [that] should be a *locus classicus* for today's gender critics and advocates of experimental fiction” (Moore, 1995, p. 9). A glittering whirlwind of a world, *In Transit* is populated by gender deviants, castrato opera singers, lesbian luggage porters, gay Don Juans, monstrous conveyor belts, and parachuting nuns, for example, which inspired the way in which I have experimented with queer and gender nonconforming characters in *Gaudy Bauble's* "Socialist Britain" (pp. 152, 173).

The chapter develops and reflects on a genre which is in formation in *Gaudy Bauble*, and which I have called agential realist fiction. Like many postmodernist fictions, *In Transit* [IT]¹¹⁰ enacts a fictional world that is antirepresentational, antimimetic, surrealistic or antirealistic.¹¹¹ Arguably, *IT's* world is an impossible, incoherent object, designed to reveal itself to be an assemblage of signs. Both, modernist and postmodernist fictions emerged in opposition to the realist novel and its basic tenet that “language passively reflects a coherent, meaningful and ‘objective’ world” (Waugh, 1984, p. 3). Simplistically speaking, modernist literatures tended to foreground the epistemological crisis that was caused by the now uncertain relationship of knowledge and the ‘real world’ (or, more generally, representations and entities represented). Postmodernist fictions responded to “an even more thoroughgoing sense that reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices,

veered towards postmodernism on the ground of *In Transit's* "metafictive quality" and "the fragmentation of the narrator over numerous different kinds of discourses" (1995, p. 1).

¹¹⁰ Subsequent references to *In Transit* (Brophy, 1969/2002) will be given as *IT*.

¹¹¹ Antirealism as a literary term that denotes the rejection of the supposed stability of the relationship between signifier and signified. Antirealism is yet another correlative of a representational paradigm which I have displaced in my performative writing method of transliteracy (2.0).

impermanent structures” (p. 7) by creatively foregrounding their fictitiousness, artificiality and constructedness (also McHale, 1987, 2012).

Shaped by their orientation towards antirealism, I argue that postmodernist fictions have tended to enact the dichotomy between representations and entities represented, not as a dichotomy between language as material event and referential function (see 1.2; also iii.ii), but more generally as a dichotomy between the real world and the imaginary realm of fiction. Speaking of Samuel Beckett’s (1906-1989) character in *The Unnamable*, for example, Brian McHale refers to “the unbreachable barrier between the fictional world [of *The Unnamable*] and the real world which Beckett shares with us, his readers” (1987, p. 13). In Chapter Two, I have already argued that transliteracy as an avant-garde writing method with a queer orientation works across the realms of practice and fictional content (as well as displacing dichotomies including authorship and process, subjectivity and objectivity, materiality and signification, and factual and fictional modes of writing).¹¹²

Agential realist fiction¹¹³ develops postmodernist fiction's orientation towards antirealism as a subverted form of realism, which displaces the distinction between realism and antirealism entirely. I will develop the rationale behind (and the implications

¹¹² N. Katherine Hayles (1991/1993) proposed an early semiotics, constraint constructivism, which tentatively revised the presumed independence of representations from entities represented. Not willing to “relinquish a term as central to literary discourse as representation”, she proposed “another way of formulating it that will make representation a dynamic process rather than a static mirroring (p. 28). According to constraint constructivism, “within the representations we construct, some are ruled out by constraints [the nature of physical reality], other are not (ibid).”

¹¹³ Agential realist fiction takes its name from Karen Barad's nonrepresentational, or relational, ontology, agential realism (2007). Representations (or concepts) and entities represented (materiality) are causally and ontologically relational in agential realism. For example, concepts in the sciences are embodied as experimental arrangements (p. 143). I argue that, similarly, language is an embodied concept.

of) the shift from antirealism to agential realist fiction by situating *GB* explicitly in relation to Brophy's *IT* and its poststructuralist literary analyses (Maack, 1995; Stevenson, 1991, for example). Specifically, I will compare the enactment of sex and gender in *IT* and *GB* which is representative of the more general development from one genre to the other.

Significantly, the shift from antirealism to agential realist fiction entailed a shift from the strategic deconstruction of gender norms (via gender fluidity) in *IT* (see 3.1) towards the proliferation and pluralification of nonconforming sexes in *GB* (3.3-3.3.3). *IT*'s antirealist portrayals of its protagonist's spontaneous sex changes, for example, facilitated interpretations as existing on the level of consciousness, identity and gender only (and as distinct from the physiological body and existing power relations). Whilst highly effective in the poststructuralist project to expose naturalised artifice and to deconstruct gender norms, the sheer impossibility of *IT*'s fictions arguably deprives them of subversive power when refracted through current LGBTQI+ realities, concerns and debates (3.1 and 3.2).

The chapter incorporates a case study which analyses the way in which I have enacted the proliferation of radically nonconforming sexes and genders in *GB*'s *CHAPTER 15. PAINLEVÉ HYPERCAMP & AXOIOTTL* (3.3-3.3.3). In Chapter Two, I have shown how I have employed transliteracy to produce nonnormative characters in *GB*, for example the Icy Pet (2.3-2.3.3). I have argued that the Icy Pet was shaped and defined by engaging and mangling diverse human and nonhuman, fictional and factual, material and semiotic actors and agencies. Like all other attributes and features that define *GB*'s characters, their respective sexes and genders are products of agentially distributed, experimental practices (including the characters' actions and my writing

practice, transliteracy). Perhaps most radically, I have experimented not only with nonbinary sexes, but also with what I will term posthuman sexes. In *GB*, physiological sex is not a direct correlate of the typical bodily signifiers or biological 'sex markers' (chromosomes, genitalia, hormones, for example), but neither is it divorced from a physiological and material context (see 3.1). Drawing on more relational forms of embodiment (Hanson, 2013; Haraway, 1988/1991, for example), my character AxoLottl's nonconforming sex and queer sexuality, as products of agentially distributed experimental practices, incorporate actors and agencies beyond the biological body (see 3.2; 3.3.2 and 3.3.3).

To give some preliminary examples, Orsun Ursol (pp. 157ff) is a chalk drawing resembling a *Pacman* ghost, a tooth or a reverse tulip. Incorporating, mangling and embodying various historical gay stereotypes and their critiques, Orsun Ursol emerges as a critical gender transcender with a feminist/lesbian hue: she is the chalky, tulip-shaped agent of "*nouveau she-chique*" (p. 162) which amounts to a radically nonconforming, posthuman sex or gender. The GoldSeXual StatUette (pp. 182ff) is a composite character comprising a fibreglass cygnet (a 'new UU'), and the human protagonists, Blulip and Hilary. In an innuendo-laden chapter, the GoldSeXual StatUette appears to be fixing a light bulb to the ceiling. Arguably, her extended, multiple and distributed sex incorporates diverse actors and agencies, some of which might be traditionally related to gender, sex and sexuality, whereas others might not be. As the novella states: "The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte combined long-term queer activisms (new UU), queened-up agenderism (Blulip), and no-fucks-giving butchness (Hilary) into a post-binary, extra-individual, socio-biological sex and a transformative gender" (p. 184). Finally, the transarmy derive from a pattern on a human protagonist's jumper (pp. 164ff). The

pattern depicts heads in profile surrounded by question-marks, reflecting the transarmy's situatedness within long-term LGBTQI+ histories and activism. Their orientation is away from these often vexed and non-inclusive histories, but the transarmy's interventions are critically shaped within this context, rather than antagonistically (p. 165).

Before I will get to the case study (3.3-3.3.3), I will situate my practice in relation to Brophy's *IT*. Specifically, I will discuss her experiments with sex and gender and the critical debates they engendered (3.1). Further, I will offer a new analysis of an exceptional chapter in Brophy's *IT* (3.2) which exceeds the poststructuralist context that arguably shaped it, and which inspired the way in which I have worked with sex and gender in *GB*. The conclusion to the chapter reflects on the genre agential realist fiction, and I will resume these reflections in the conclusion to the thesis.

3.1 Poststructuralist analyses of Brigid Brophy's *In Transit* (1969/2002):

deconstruction, social constructionism, antirealism

Inspired by the glamour of (pre-*Ryanair*) air travel, *In Transit* is set in a departure lounge of an airport. Here, in public and in front of her cappuccino, a protagonist, variously called Patrick, Patricia, Pat, BARBARA, Bunny, Slim or Evelyn Hilary O'Rooley, experiences a form of sex amnesia. As a consequence or correlative of a fictional ailment, "linguistic leprosy" (Brophy, 1969/2002, p. 11), where "[c]e qu'il etonnait c'était qu'il was [her] French that disintegrated first" (ibid), Pat literally forgets what sex s/he is. ("I'd been, thanks to such mental maladroitnesses of mine as my compulsion to pun and my liability to become geographically disorientated, ... in funny fixes before" (p. 74).)

This results in Pat's ultimately futile quest to re-establish her or his sex, and a series of high camp sex and gender-flicking adventures in the setting of the airport lounge.

O'Rooley's various incarnations include gay boy 'Patricia' who is courted by 'Don Juan', an older gay man; the male or butch leader of a group of lesbian paramilitary porters; the female masochist and play-actor Och; and Patrick, the male quiz show contestant, for example. Throughout the novel, she or he flicks from gender to gender and sex to sex willy-nilly, impossibly appearing as male, lesbian, gay from one scene to the next.

In 1995, *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*¹¹⁴ published a special issue on Brophy, including a series of poststructuralist literary analyses of *In Transit* (Hovarth, 1995; Maack, 1995; Moore, 1995). Pre-empting poststructuralist feminist analytics of gender as a linguistic and sociocultural effect, *IT* is seen to foreground the constructedness, fictitiousness, and, as a correlate, the mutability, fluidity and indeterminacy of gender and sexuality (Maack, 1995; Moore, 1995; also Stevenson, 1991). Some scholars saw protagonist Pat as experiencing a spell of gender confusion, or an identity crisis as an effect or symptom of a more general, generative deterioration of linguistic capacities, Brophy's linguistic leprosy. Others saw Pat as a poststructuralist, gender-fluctuating, gender-fickle, proto-queer pioneer.

While poststructuralist theory and postmodernist literary strategies were highly effective in exposing naturalised artifice and challenging positivism, essentialism and biological determinism, limiting the discussions to gender parody, gender confusion or gender fluidity seems to disregard the fact that, in *IT*'s narrative, Pat's concerns are with his or her physiological sex. For example, *Dalkey Archive Press's* blurb for the 2002 edition

¹¹⁴ <http://www.dalkeyarchive.com/product/vol-xv-3-brigid-brophy-robert-creeley-osman-lins/> [accessed 3 April 2016]

describes IT as a ‘*transsexual* adventure’, rather than a ‘transgender adventure’. The poststructuralist critiques I discuss here have relegated Brophy’s most radical inventions, Pat’s corporeal sex changes, to his/her (Pat’s) imagination and disintegrating, leprotic consciousness. They are compared to “fantasized metamorphoses” (Stevenson, 1991, p. 187), and interpreted and explained on the levels of consciousness and gender (as opposed to physical reality, sex and the body). As Maack writes: “Pat’s absurd experiences take place only on the level of language” (1995, p. 42). Pat’s impossible, antirealistically sex-flicking body, I argue, engendered a social constructionism in *IT* where gender as a social construct is set apart from an unconstructed materiality, and the realm of fiction is set apart from reality.¹¹⁵

One of the problems is the ease with which anti-essentialism and social constructionism are connected with self-determination, choice and unhampered possibilities of becoming in a post-identity world (see 1.4.1 for a discussion of the one-sided allocation of agency within the human or language in social constructionism). According to Stevenson, for example, *IT*’s narrative discourse around Pat’s unfixed gender identity “elaborat[es] the benefits and egalitarian politics of choosing a nonstatic, nondefined state of becoming” (1991, p. 186). Pat’s physical mutations are interpreted as her “trying on numerous styles of manliness or femininity” (p. 188). As an impromptu

¹¹⁵ In a poststructuralist paradigm, social reality, identity and gender, for example, were understood to be the naturalised effects of power and discourse and on this basis similarly *constructed*. The postmodernist tenet, and that I argue continues to shape contemporary literary experiments (Bök, 2000s-ongoing, 2001b), is that ‘reality’, or scientific fact, is *like* fiction, in the sense that *both are made up*. As experimental novelist and literary theorist Christine Brooke-Rose wrote: “[T]he argument is that stories have now taken the place of theories or matter of facts” (1991, p. 5-6). In other words, fictional worlds and real worlds, as socio-cultural, contingent effects of discourse, were seen to be *like* each other, but they were also seen to be *a priori* apart from ‘the real world’, that is heterocosmic (McHale, 2012, p. 145).

quiz show contestant, Pat indeed "resolved to be Patrick" and "coolly and decisively" (in a masculine way?) fires his winning answer (Brophy, 1969/2002, p. 135). In a later sequence, Stevenson writes, Pat *decides* she is instead a lesbian. According to Stevenson, "*IT* highlights the mutability of texts, languages, conceptions of gender, and individual identities" (p. 193). Pat's "parodies draw attention to the process of self-definition through language" (ibid). Brophy wrote that "at least one of the hero(in)es immolated throughout these pages [*In Transit*] is language" (1969/2002, p. 214), and I take this to mean that language functioned an agent in its own right as well as a medium. *IT*'s narrative might divert for the sake of a pun, for example, and this is one of several aspects that Brophy's novel shares with *GB*. On the level of her writing method, I argue, Brophy disrupts voluntarism and authorial expression. However, with its antirealist orientation, *IT* inadvertently enacts a gender politics of entitlement in content.

Arguably, critiques of voluntarism have ongoing relevance across current LGBTQI+ contexts and debates. These complex and highly invested debates exceed the scope of the thesis, but I will identify certain trends that influenced my gender subversion strategies in *GB* (and which I will develop in 3.3-3.3.3). On the one hand, a trendy version of gender queerness and transgenderism has recently crossed into the mainstream. Divorced from the physiological body and sexuality, the identity category trans*¹¹⁶ or transgender might be appropriated to resource or spruce up otherwise normative subject positions.¹¹⁷ Within contemporary queer and trans* communities,

¹¹⁶ The asterisk emphasises the inclusion of diverse gender nonconforming identities, including nonbinary, transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, transmen and transwomen, for example.

¹¹⁷ In February 2016, for example, *The Guardian* newspaper conducted a survey, asking: "Male, female or other: young people, how do you define your gender?"

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/03/male-female-other-young->

voluntarist notions of gender and sex are prevailing, too. Whilst self-definition might be preferable to biological essentialism, we are running the risk of producing exclusions and positions of stuckness and abjection. (The hypothetical, but symptomatic statement "I'd rather be a cute transboy than an ugly butch dyke" might enact one such exclusion, for example.) On the other hand, a primary site of intervention within the LGBTQI+ and trans* communities is the individual, physiological body, and I will outline how some of these debates shaped *GB* in the next section (3.2). The conceptualisation of gender, sex, or sexuality as choice is not one I want to reproduce in my fictions. Poet CA Conrad poignantly writes: "[A]s far as I know noone chooses it [to be gay]" (2016, p. 85). And "I mean why on Earth would anyone choose to be queer, it's very hard (ibid)." Countering a highly generative but misconstrued reading of *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler has argued that "the misapprehension about gender performativity is this: that gender is a choice, or that gender is a role, or that gender is a construction that one puts on, as one puts on clothes in the morning, that there is a one who is prior to this gender, a one who goes to the wardrobe of gender and decides with deliberation which gender it will be today" (1993b, p. 21). To quote Sutton-born pioneer of queer effeminacy Quentin Crisp (1908-1999): "In any major issues I did not have a choice" (1968/1990, p. 8). Quentin Crisp did not wear outrageous eye shadow to *express* himself, nor to make himself more interesting. He used lipstick and makeup in order to introduce *some* form of agency into what he clearly understood exceeded his control (his embodied 'effeminacy' and how inevitably it was perceived and engaged with). Crisp's activism recruited and subverted

[people-define-gender](#) [accessed 26 April 2016]; or on 29th December 2015, BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour ran a programme called *Was 2015 the year transgender became mainstream?*

the ways in which the body is always already mediated but not determined through sociocultural (including biological) norms and networks of signification and meaning.

In *GB*, gender is neither a pure artefact of social constructionism, nor is it an individual choice, nor is it separable from (nonbinary) sex and (queer) sexuality. I have engaged more relational analyses of sex and gender in my practice which are situated more centrally in LGBTQI+ experiences, histories and debates; which are connected to a physiological body (and that consider the material agency of the body and beyond); and which displace the distinctions between gender as a social construct and biological sex as a pre-existing, natural entity.¹¹⁸ I will evidence these claims discussing the characters Painlevé Hypercamp and AxoLottl in the following case study.

The reorientation from postmodernist fictions' antirealism towards agential

¹¹⁸ The dichotomy between sex and gender (arguably reproduced in *IT*) is another correlative of a representational paradigm that fundamentally differentiates between language, culture, social construction and fiction on the one hand, and nature, biology, and unconstructed materiality on the other. The dichotomy between sex and gender is based on the presumption that gender is socially constructed and that biological sex is 'natural', pre-existing, fixed and stable. This continues to be a prevalent conception: While many accept that gender is largely socially constructed, they might maintain that this construct is 'inscribed' onto a pre-existing, biological, natural, physiological, differentially sexed (male or female) human body (Hird, 2004). This view presumes that a distinction can be made between the biological and the cultural (ibid). Throughout the thesis, I have argued that scientific objects, encompassing biological sex, are 'constructeddiscovered' in experimental practice. Biological (or 'natural') facts are already embedded in culture and normative conceptions of gender (Fausto-Sterling, 2001, p. 4; Haraway, 1997; Hird, 2004). A project of normalisation (Fausto-Sterling, 1997, 2001, for example) affects what scientific experiments are designed, what research is funded, what findings or differences are being paid attention to, and ultimately what emerges as biological fact and normatively sexed body. Sociologist of science Myra Hird argues that "*a priori* scientific and cultural inscriptions of sexual 'difference' served to direct [scientific] analyses toward the confirmation of sexual dichotomy, *despite abundant evidence of sex diversity*" (2004, p. 6). She states that "[t]he diversity of sex and sexual behaviour of living organism on this planet is far more diverse than human cultural notions typically allow" (p. 117; also Fausto-Sterling, 1993; Bagemihl, 2001). Going beyond these debates, *GB* foregrounds the enactment of sexes beyond the biological body, which might be produced in nonscientific practices (see 3.3-3.3.3; also 3.2).

realist fiction, I argue, has entailed a shift from the deconstruction of sex and gender in *IT* towards the proliferation and pluralification of nonconforming, but not antirealistic, sexes in *GB*. This involved developing a whole range of characters and their respective sexes and sexualities, for example, rather than an impossibly versatile protagonist who flies through every imaginable sex and sexuality in a short period of time. Before I will get to the case study, I will discuss an exceptional chapter in Brophy's *In Transit* which exceeds the existing poststructuralist analyses, and which influenced the way in which I have enacted sex and gender in *GB*.

3.2 *In Transit's* proto-performative experiments with posthuman sexes and genders

I have already argued that I have employed P.I. Belahg's search for the missing co-authors Tulep and Gotterbarm for its generative effects in *Gaudy Bauble*. The generative effects of experimental practice were enacted in *GB's* narrative as a proliferation of nonnormative actors, characters, or what I have also termed a[n]ge(nt)[l]s (see 2.0; also .ii). The way that I have foregrounded the ontological effects of an epistemological process (P.I. Belahg's investigation), rather than the discoveries or findings, was inspired by the performativity of experimentation (Barad, 2007; Despret, 2007; Hacking, 1983; Mol, 2001; Pickering, 1999; Rheinberger, 1997, for example). I argue that Brophy, in *IT's* chapter *THE CASE OF THE MISSING (RE)MEMBER*, similarly recruits said case, or *search*, for the missing (re)member for its performative effects. The strategic relevance of Brophy's experiments in this chapter, exceptionally, is not the deconstruction of gender, but rather the production of radically innovative, posthuman sexes in fiction.

Here, Brophy challenged voluntarism on the level of writing method (being attentive to both, the semiotic and material capacities of language), and also in content. Pat's sexual identity is not endlessly transient and indeterminate in this chapter, and certainly not arbitrarily chosen. Extending both, a metaphor (Brophy's) and existing analyses (Maack, 1995; Stevenson, 1991), I argue that linguistic leprosy is an affliction not just of the mind, consciousness and identity, but also of sex, the body and beyond.

In *THE CASE OF THE MISSING (RE)MEMBER*, Pat sits in the airport lounge's café, trying to establish her sex. "It was during the scudding of the back of the spoon across the opaque liquid [her cappuccino]" (Brophy, 1969/2002, p. 71) that Pat realized she could no longer remember what sex she was.

"[E]mpirical inquiry be my guide.
 Going, in a matter that was, after all, elemental, straight to the point, I looked down my sitting body to the point where my legs met. I was wearing trousers. They were of black corduroy (the thick, brad-ribbed kind). They opened down the front by a zip, a few of whose metallic railway sleepers I could see at the top of the track but the rest of which was concealed by fly. At the region round and below the base of the fly I peered closely down. I was sure that direct inquiry, now that I'd at last come up with the coolness to call on it, would have me out of my fix in a trice. To my surprise, deduction was not easy. What baffled me seemed to be that mine were not close-fitting trousers. A second scrutiny shewed that up as inexact. It was rather that *they closely followed their, not my, configuration*. So far from presenting a significant lack of bulges, the region made a whole rolling landscape of bulges. *The difficulty was to know which, if any, were significant*. Corduroy seemed as material contradictorily both soft and stiff. It draped softly, but created airpockets of its own to be draped over. *It was virtually erectile tissue in its own right*" (Brophy, 1969/2002, p. 71, my emphases).

Pat finds that the "region [her crotch area] made a whole rolling landscape of bulges. *The difficulty was to know which, if any, were significant*" (ibid, my emphasis). For me, this constitutes a critique of the biological entity 'sex' in a sentence. It draws attention to the

randomness and contingency of physical sex signifiers, including the senselessness of ascribing symbolic and actual power to one “bulge” over that of another. Corduroy, I argue, is here not enacted as an epistemological barrier behind which ‘true’ sex disappears. Rather, Brophy invests Pat's trousers with their own “thick, brad-ribbed” (ibid) and palatably *material* agency. As the text states, the trousers “*followed their, not my, configuration*” (ibid). I argue that Brophy begins to imagine a new, nonbinary, posthuman sex that incorporates an actor beyond conventional sex signifiers and also beyond the biological human body. “Corduroy seemed as material contradictorily both soft and stiff. It draped softly, but created airpockets of its own to be draped over. *It was virtually erectile tissue in its own right*” (ibid). As “erectile tissue in its own right”, corduroy appears to co-constitute Pat's sex. Pat's sex and sexual identity, I argue, are affected by corduroy, rather than by the absence or presence of a more conventional sex marker, i.e. a penis. Had this chapter been in *GB*, there would be a *feruroy* sex. Not male or female, but *cordumale* or *feruroy* (gender pronoun: *cor* and *fer*)! In the continuation of the scene, Pat's subsequent inquiry into (female) breasts also proves inconclusive. In cooperation with an “ambiguousexed blouse” (p. 80), Pat's inquiry produces the nonbinary upper part of Pat's new sex. The blouse “ran away in all directions beneath [Pat's] gaze into fold mountains and rift valleys *of its own*” (p. 80, my emphasis).¹¹⁹

In the following case study, I will argue that *GB* develops *IT*'s proto-performative experiments with sex and gender by engaging *materialities other than and beyond the biological body*. Clothes, fashion, and drag, for example, are not enacted as expressions of gender in

¹¹⁹ To give a final example of invention of yet another, spectacular posthuman sex: “If I'd had to go on the evidence of my trousers alone, I would have been obliged to believe that an exceptionally long penis took its rise half-way down the inside of my left thigh and presently curled like coral over the front of my leg towards my knee” (1969/2002, ref).

GB, mediated through consumerism and neoliberal notions of self-definition. Nor are they drag in the conventional sense of the word, as parody.¹²⁰ In *GB*, I have recruited DIY bikinis, a budgerigar figurine gaffer-taped to a character's thigh, autobiographical elements, and lived resistances to prohibitive gender norms into the reconfiguration of what might count as gendered embodiment in *Gaudy Bauble*.

In a contemporary queer subcultures, trans* activism has focused on interventions on the individual, sexed body, or what has been termed 'biodrag'. These activisms and survival strategies include (self-)medication with synthetic Testosterone, or full or partial, 'top' or 'bottom', gender reassignment surgery. One of the works capturing the zeitgeist is Paul (formerly Beatriz) Preciado's *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (2012), that merges autobiographical vignettes with a foucauldian genealogy of what she terms the porno-pharmaceutically constructed subject, and that describes and analyses her self-experiments taking testosterone for a year. Transitioning takes on a variety of physical forms and identities, which not always involve 'full' transitioning from one sex and gender to 'the other', but increasingly takes on the shape of a nonbinary, transgendered body and identity. Where post-op transsexuals were once seen to be 'fixing nature's mistake', and to identify as either male or female according to their destination sex, increasingly transgender persons identify as nonbinary, postbinary, tpoc (trans person of colour), gender nonconforming, gender variant, FtM (Female to Male), MtF (Male to Female), for example. Extending existing forms of transgender activism, including the mobilisation of already existing sex pluralities (3.1), *GB* foregrounds the strategic importance of incorporating diverse body

¹²⁰ Drag as parody is a classic poststructuralist strategy that draws attention to the artifice and constructedness of gender (see below for the concepts of biodrag, and drag king corpo/reality (Hanson, 2013)).

parts, and nonhuman and human others, into our imaginaries and conceptualisations of what counts as a sex signifier and what physiological sex actually might be. Rather than reproducing the entity 'sex' as a property of a reductionist, 'neuropharmaphysiological' body, I have considered in *GB* how the sexed body might be enacted and produced in diverse agentially distributed experimental practices.

One recent example of a conceptualisation of a relational, hybrid form of embodiment is Julie Hanson's (2013) concept of "drag king embodiment" (p. 72) or "drag king corpo/reality" (p. 80). Drawing on Karen Barad's (2007) relational ontology, agential realism, drag king corpo/reality, Hanson argues, depends on a coming together of human and nonhuman forms of agency (p. 88), effectively extending embodiment and incorporating clothes, accoutrements such as facial hair, or a sock/dildo stuffed down the king's pants to simulate a penis bulge. Drag king embodiment exceeds the traditional meaning of drag as parody and deconstruction, and I will discuss how this and other more relational forms of embodiment inspired *GB*'s AxoLottl and Painlevé Hypercamp in the following case study.

3.3 Nonconforming sexes and genders in *Gaudy Bauble*: Painlevé Hypercamp and AxoLottl

I have already given some preliminary examples of the queer and gender nonconforming characters that populate *GB*'s world, 'Socialist Britain' (see 3.0). The novella's *Chapter 15* (pp. 197ff) develops two of these characters, Painlevé Hypercamp and AxoLottl and their respective sexes and genders as products of my writing method, transliteracy. The case study foregrounds a discussion of how I have achieved *GB*'s orientation as an agential realist fiction. This involved the implication of realistic

analyses of sex and gender as relational and embodied (see 3.1); and of factual, autobiographical elements which were transformed in experimental practice (3.3.3). Secondly, the case study illustrates how I have extended the meaning of physiological sex to encompass subjects, objects, facts, fictions and practices beyond the reductionist human body in *GB*.

3.3.1 Painlevé Hypercamp

Painlevé Hypercamp is protagonist Blulip's drag alter ego. She is Blulip "with her top off" (p. 204). She is the product of an agential assemblage colliding Blulip's objective to make Tulep.tv's programme "relevant for the viewer" (p. 200); film footage of an aquarium animal (p. 197); the French filmmaker and biologist Jean Painlevé's (1902-1989) historical underwater film, *L'Hippocampe* (1934/2008); a near homophone of the French word for seahorse, '*hippocampe*'; and the character's enactment and embodiment of "gay exuberance" (p. 204) during a queer love scene with P.I. Belahg's alter ego, AxoLottl (3.3.3).

Chapter 15 begins with Blulip and P.I. Loveday discussing the film footage which the former is editing for her digital TV channel, Tulep.tv. The footage was shot by P.I. Belahg in the previous *Chapter 12. MÖRDERVOGEL*, investigating a sea urchin's, Colt's, relation to the AWOL bird, Tulep (pp. 189ff). The footage depicts Colt. This evoked the historical underwater films of Jacques Cousteau (1910-1997), Hans Hass (1919-2013), and Jean Painlevé: "Jacques Cousteau's *Night of the Squid* sprang to mind as a superior example of the genre, or perhaps Jean Painlevé's *Les Assassins d'Eau Douce* (1949), *Freshwater Assassins*" (p. 198). Cousteau, Hass and Painlevé's films are part of the queer

avant-garde archive (.iii) which sustains and inspires my writing practice (2.3-2.3.3).

They have fascinated me in the past on the grounds of the alternative worlds they stage¹²¹, and their combining of aesthetics, poetics, aquamarine life, fiction, science, dramatisation and documentation. *Chapter 15* lists Painlevé's films which engendered the semiotic fluke *L'Hippocampe*/hypercamp: "The French *haute-bourgeois* dramaturges had produced *Cristaux Liquides* (1978), and a film showing a male sea horse in labour pain, *L'Hippocampe* (1934). *L'Hippocampe*, Hypercamp" (p. 199). As the novella states: "Painlevé Hypercamp just popped into existence" (ibid). The character has yet to develop, but the aforementioned seahorse's reversal of conventional sex roles subtly affects the particular queerness of Painlevé Hypercamp already.

The name Painlevé Hypercamp collides a reference to Jean Painlevé, and the near homonym 'hypercamp' of the French word for seahorse, *hippocampe*. Painlevé Hypercamp, the name, effects what it names, engendering a (hyper)camp drag persona. Throughout the thesis I have argued that transliteracy radically displaces the distinction between language as a material event and referential function, as both values have the capacity to influence *GB*'s content (.v; 2.3.2). Names and language do not necessarily produce their effects in terms of their referential denotation. They might produce their effects in terms of their many extra-referential, or material, capacities and affinities. Accordingly, '*hippocampe*' effected its near homonym 'hypercamp', which in turn effected the eponymous characteristic in terms of its referential denotation.

Painlevé Hypercamp's sexuality, sex and gender gain further specificity once she engages with a second character, AxoLottl, in experimental practice (see 3.3.3).

¹²¹ Animalesque characters feature heavily in my previous fictions, for example *Frantisek Flounders* (2011) (.iv).

3.3.2 AxoLottl

AxoLottl is the gendered and sexed alter ego of protagonist P.I. Belahg. She is the product of an agential assemblage colliding Blulip's objective to make Tulep.tv's programme, in Loveday's words, "relevant for the viewer" (p. 200); historical underwater model Lotte Hass (1928 –2015) (Fig. 9)¹²²; Argentinian novelist Julio Cortázar's (1914-1984)¹²³ short story *Axolotl* (1956/1998); the word 'brief' (denoting an outline of an argument) that, via its near homonym 'briefs' (underpants), effects a bikini; a budgerigar figurine gaffer-taped to P.I. Belahg's thigh; P.I. Belahg's rejection of prohibitive femininities inspired by my own autobiography; genderqueer teenage aspirations represented by the British pop singer Simon Le Bon; and an unconventional sex or love scene between P.I. Belahg and Blulip as Painlevé Hypercamp and AxoLottl (3.3.3).

AxoLottl originates in a discussion or lecture about Tulep.tv's programming, and how, in P.I. Loveday's words, Blulip might make the programme relevant for the viewer. (Throughout the novella, P.I. Loveday, P.I. Belahg's antagonist or rival, represents a conservative attitude and approach to investigation.) Loveday suggests that this might be achieved by "anthropomorphis[ing] the monster" (p. 200), referring to the sea urchin, Colt, featured in Blulip's footage. Alternatively, Loveday uses the example of real-life "[s]ecretary, underwater fotographer, underwater glamour model and actor Lotte Hass" (ibid) to illustrate how, in Loveday's view, Blulip might render otherwise abstract and alienating film footage accessible and attractive to viewers. Loveday advises Blulip to

¹²² Lotte Hass (*née* Baierl) was the wife of the Austrian diving pioneer Hans Hass. She worked as an underwater model and actress in several of his films, for example *Under the Red Sea* (1950).

¹²³ Julio Cortázar was a novelist and short story writer whose work has influenced me in the past. He was rumoured to be closeted-gay/bisexual, and to have died of AIDS in 1984 (see also Conclusion).

"provide EYE CANDY" (ibid). Arguably, Lotte Hass appeared in her husband's films as a sexualised object for a male gaze (Mulvey, 1975) (rather than as an actor and diving pioneer in her own right). "To the delight of the audience [Lotte Hass] wore a low-cut swimming costume," states Lotte Hass's Wikipedia entry.¹²⁴ See Fig. 9. In Loveday's view, the appeal of a film, Blulip's film, is linked to sex appeal.

Subsequently, the narrative develops Loveday's version of appeal and attractiveness into what will come to be termed "*Loveday's brief*" (p. 201). *Loveday's brief* is a normative and offensive version of what might captivate an audience, depending on a male-orientated form of femininity, eye candy, sexism, and conventional notions of narrative and drama.



Fig. 9: Lotte Hass in Hans Hass's feature film *Under the Red Sea* (1950)

¹²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lotte_Hass [accessed 20 April 2016]

Meanwhile, Blulip imagines ways of enacting connectedness, absorption and engagement that are different to *Loveday's brief*. Specifically, Blulip "half-remembered [the] Argentinian/French 1950s narration, *Axolotl*, that featured the eponymous Mexican walking fish" (p. 201). The name AxoLottl combines the first name of Lotte Hass and name of the "1950s narration" (ibid), *Axolotl*. Transliteracy engendered the surprise semiotic opportunity, Axo-Lott-l (comparable to Icy Pet (see 2.3.2) and Painlevé Hypercamp (3.3.1)).

The narration in question is Julio Cortázar's short story *Axolotl* (1956/1998).¹²⁵ In *Axolotl*, a human protagonist researches and obsesses over a salamander species called axolotls.¹²⁶ In becoming increasingly acquainted with the physicality and biology of the creature, Cortázar's protagonist gradually sinks into the world of, and is ultimately absorbed by the axolotl. He transforms into an axolotl, i.e. he becomes his research object: "There was a time when I thought a great deal about the axolotls. ... Now I am an axolotl" (Cortázar, 1956/1998, p.161).¹²⁷

Cortázar's *Axolotl* enacts a form of relating that Blulip might aspire to. Blulip might wish for her potential audiences to relate to Tulep.tv's content like Cortázar's protagonist relates to the axolotl. During the writing process, I incorporated Cortázar's story on the grounds of the following affinities: underwater setting and the theme of absorption were central to *GB's* and also to *Axolotl's* storylines. (See Chapter Two for an analysis of transliteracy's reliance on the detection and development of affinities between

¹²⁵ <https://coursewikis.fas.harvard.edu/aiu18/Axolotl> [accessed 20 April 2016]

¹²⁶ The axolotl is an unusual creature, akin, perhaps, to *GB's* hoofed budgerigar Tulep, or the winged horse on a sweater, Peggy, for example.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axolotl> [accessed 20 April 2016]

¹²⁷ The full text of *Axolotl* (Cortázar, 1956) is available online:

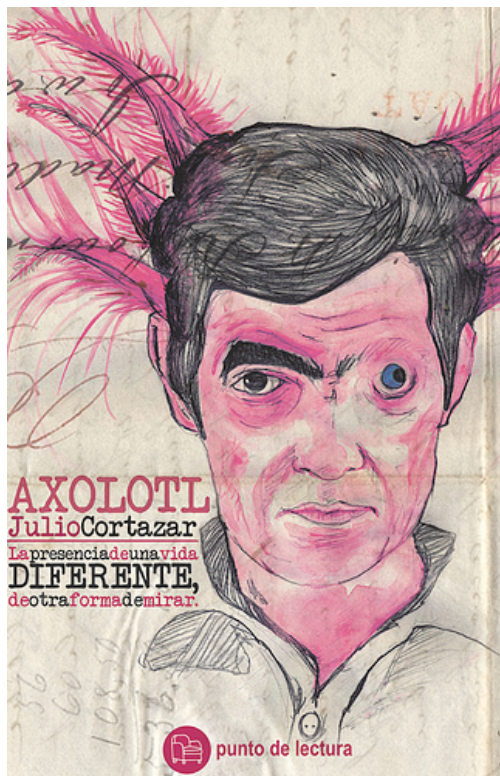
<http://southerncrossreview.org/73/axolotl.html> [accessed 22nd March 2016]

diverse actors and agencies from my queer avant-garde archive.) Cortázar's *Axolotl* provides an alternative to P.I Loveday's argument that engagement should be achieved through conventional notions of drama, narrative, or sex appeal. Blulip's aspiration for Tulep.tv resonates with my own aim to engage a readership in an avant-garde text, *Gaudy Bauble* (see .v, for a variant approach to absorption (Bernstein, 1987/1992)).

Arguably, the combination of relating and transformation staged in Cortázar's *Axolotl* resonates with what many scholars have argued are the production of overlaps between diverse human and nonhuman actors (like Cortázar's protagonist and the axolotl) in practice-led knowledge procedures (Despret, 2008; Latour, 1999, for example; see 2.1.1). The thesis displaces the distinction between writing fiction and research practices across the disciplines, including experimentation in the sciences. The production of resonances between, and the transformation of, ontologically diverse actors in transliteracy engendered *Gaudy Bauble's* content and queer avant-garde poetics. An agential realist version of Cortázar's *Axolotl* might depend on both, the protagonist *and* the axolotl's transformation, in agreement with the particular resonances or 'shared interests' (Despret, 2008) they might have produced in experimental practice.

Like Brigid Brophy's *IT*, *Axolotl* has often been termed surrealistic (McNab, 1997). Like *IT's* sex hopping protagonist (3.1), *Axolotl* encourages an interpretation that relegates the protagonist's comprehensive and one-sided metamorphosis to the metaphorical, surreal or fantastical realm (whereas the revised version I offered might facilitate a critical face-value reading). A slight shift of emphasis in the shaping stage develops postmodernist fictions like *IT* and *Axolotl* into agential realist fictions, investing them with the capacity to resonate within contemporary contexts, lives and debates, thus reinvigorating their subversive power (see 3.4). These concerns and considerations have

not only shaped my writing practice and *GB*, they also factor into AxoLottl's radically queer sex and sexuality which is in formation in *Chapter 15*. AxoLottl incorporates questions around variant forms of relating and relationality, rejecting the sexist positioning of femininity and femaleness that inform *Loveday's brief* and the notion of eye candy.



Figs. 10 & 11: Anonymous fan posters depicting the hybridisation of Julio Cortázar and an axolotl.

Chapter 10. THE GOLDSEXUAL STATUETTE develops Blulip's fear of Tulep.tv's folding due to insignificant viewing numbers. The survival of her digital channel depends on audience engagement. Against her better judgment, Blulip is susceptible to *Loveday's brief*. In my precedent discussion of *L'Hippocampe* (1934/2008) and its relation to the character Painleve Hypercamp, I have argued that both, extra-referential and referential values of a word have the capacity to affect the narrative in transliteracy. Likewise, *Loveday's brief* shapes *Chapter 15* in various ways: According to its homonymic denotation, the word *brief*, via *briefs* or underpants, effects a bikini in the narrative. As the novella has it: "Blulip sewed ... a nifty bikini" (p. 201). In what follows, Blulip enrolls P.I. Belahg into wearing the bikini and pose as 'eye candy' for Tulep.tv's potential viewers.

3.3.3 The love scene

AxoLottl is P.I. Belahg wearing a weird bikini (above her t-shirt and oversized man's pants that arguably constitute a more typical butch or androgynous sleeping outfit). Seemingly motivated by her wish to render a nonhuman object "relevant to an otherwise indifferent audience" (p. 202), Blulip fastens the object in question, a "cubit-long, aqua-*bleu* budgerigar figurine" (ibid)¹²⁸ to Belahg's thigh: "Using gaffer tape, Blulip proceeded to strap *l'objet de concern* ... vertically to AxoLottl's right thigh" (ibid).

Wearing the unfamiliar outfit, Axolottl makes for a tragic figure initially. Blulip's strategy

¹²⁸ The aqua-*bleu* budgerigar figurine is one of the wooden budgerigar figurines that proliferate throughout the narrative. They have a dual function, working as props ("female lead") in the context of Blulip's TV series, and also as clues ("evidential lead") in the context of P.I. Belahg's search for the AWOL co-authors. In the context I discuss here, the aqua-*bleu* figurine was "representative of anything that was likely to feature heavily in Tulep.tv's subsequent programming" (p. 202).

to entice audiences with eye candy backfires. Belahg/AxoLottl flies into a rage, remembering her past growing up as a gender nonconforming, butch or boyish child and teenager in the normative context of the German Black Forest. Her early gender nonconformity is captured in her aspiration to look like the lead singer of UK pop group Duran Duran, Simon Le Bon (p. 203). The gender violence, struggle and resistance this entailed do not allow her to 'play at' femininity now. Her background prevents her from choosing which gender she will be wearing today, to paraphrase Butler (1993b). Wearing a bikini does not make sense in the context of Belahg's long-term rejection of gender norms. Only the intervention of her lover Blulip as Painlevé Hypercamp enables Belahg as AxoLottl to embody a version of butch that incorporates and subverts formerly rejected forms of femininity. Embodying the locally queer social context of adult Belahg, Painlevé Hypercamp engages AxoLottl in "hypocamp micromovements" (p. 204), an "expression of gay exuberance" (ibid). The practice might be a strange dance, or an unconventional sex practice, which provides the destabilising, subversive context for the formation of AxoLottl. Diverse experimental practices including hypocamp micromovements, Blulip's filmmaking, and transliteracy work together, mangling Lotte Hass and Julio Cortázar's diverse versions of (sex) appeal; my autobiographical experience growing up in the 1980s as a gender nonconforming teenager; a weird bikini; oversized man's pants; and a budgerigar figurine strapped to Belahg's thigh. AxoLottl's hypercamp form of butchness is a joyous sex, but her transformation is not quick, nor is it based on spontaneity, gender fluidity, or self-definition. Non-binary sexes and genders are, often traumatically, linked to a body and subject shaped by and within "prior, subjectivating norms, which cannot be thrown off at will, but which work, animate, and constrain the gendered subject, and which are also the resources from which resistance,

subversion, displacement are to be forged" (Butler, 1993b, p.17). Crucial for the shift from antirealism towards agential realist fiction, AxoLottl's radical sex and embodiment is already inflected through preconceived gender norms and rooted in histories of fixedness, stubbornness, resistance, and noncompliance. For this purpose, I factored almost unmediated autobiographical elements into the developing AxoLottl character, reflecting my own past growing up a gender nonconforming teenager in the 1980s, Black Forest, Germany.

3.4 Conclusion: towards agential realist fiction

In this chapter I have developed and reflected on a new genre I have begun to develop in *GB*, agential realist fiction. The genre was shaped as a result of situating my practice more explicitly within what, for the purpose of this investigation, I have subsumed under the term postmodernist fictions. Where arguably postmodernist fictions, including Brophy's *In Transit* and Julio Cortázar's *Axolotl*, were shaped by their orientation towards antirealism, agential realist fiction and *Gaudy Bauble* destabilise the dichotomy between antirealism and realism entirely. Antirealism is a yet another correlative of a representational paradigm that separates representation and entities represented, and which I have challenged in my performative writing method, transliteracy. In terms of LGBTQI+ subversion strategies in *GB*, the development from antirealism towards agential realist fiction entailed a shift from the deconstruction of sex and gender (via the fluidity of gender) as enacted predominately in *IT*, towards the pluralification of nonconforming sexes and genders in *GB*. However, I have also argued that Brophy's novel partially exceeded the poststructuralist context and debates that arguably shaped it

(3.2). Inventing what I have termed posthuman sexes in *IT*, Brophy's proto-performative experiments with corduroy inspired me to incorporate human and nonhuman actors beyond what traditionally might count as the human body into my enactment of sex and gender in *GB*. As discussed in the case study, they have included gaffer tape, a budgerigar figurine, and even concepts such as sex appeal, absorption, or cultural references to various aquatic creatures and Simon Le Bon, for example.

Like drag king corpo/reality, *Gaudy Bauble*, its imaginaries and characters are 'neither incontrovertibly real nor pure fantastic' (Hanson, 2013, p. 102). Agential realist fiction challenges and extends what realism might mean. *Gaudy Bauble* is real in the sense of its being part of the world, including its unlikely characters and their radically nonconforming sexes and genders which might not denote an existing referent. Agential realist fiction's realist orientation does not derive from the question does it have or does not have a referent in the world. It derives from the question does it have the capacity to resonate and gel within further and future agential assemblages in a productive way? Does it resonate with readers?

GB's novelty is produced by paying attention to, and capacitating, specifically subjugated and marginal knowledges and actors so that they might factor into the narrative in a significant way (see 2.2). Whilst the world familiar to some readers might disappear beneath "escalating weirdness" (Horvath, 1995, p. 47 in respect to *IT*), agential realist fiction is rooted in fairly common practices and knowledges from more marginal (sub)cultures. Agential realist fiction mobilises what probably exists, elsewhere, for someone else, or what might exist in the future. For example, Bobàk's "ensemble compris[ing] a traditional Black Forest dress under a punky T-shirt, [and] a pair of knee-length, multi-coloured socks depicting butterflies, flowers and genitalia-shaped

insects and worms" (pp. 192-193) regularly prompts laughter at public readings. Like practically all items of clothing appearing in various capacities in *GB*, Bobàk's absurd ensemble is comprised of items either worn by myself, or others I know. *GB*'s fig. vi (p. 225) depicts a person wearing the unlikely sweater that factored into *GB*'s *Chapter 1*. *TULEP* (p. 148ff), for example. A version is depicted here as Fig. 12. Its added wings illustrate the way in which the original actor, the real-life sweater, was transformed in experimental practice, ultimately engendering *GB*'s winged horse, Peggy. Appearing towards the end of the novella, the photo is intended to surprise the sceptical reader with its depiction of an improbable, queer reality, an agential realist fiction.



Fig. 12: Lisa Blackman as Tracey Biryukov Lulip (Blulip)

Conclusion

This practice-led thesis developed and reflected on a queer avant-garde poetics which is in formation in the novella *Gaudy Bauble*. Further, it developed transliteracy as an avant-garde writing method with a queer and transdisciplinary orientation. Transliteracy builds on my long-term writing practice where I have mobilised my situated susceptibilities to the material qualities of language as a nonnative English speaker to produce experimental fictions. The method's orientation was shaped as a result of situating my practice more explicitly within exiting avant-garde writing practices. I refracted conceptual writing strategies (for example Christian Bök's *Xenotext Experiment* (2000s-ongoing)) and postmodernist fictions (for example, Brigid Brophy's *In Transit* (1969/2002)) through critical approaches to scientific experimentation that emerged in science and technology studies. Shaped in relation to precedent forms of avant-garde literature or in opposition to mainstream literature, I argued that conceptual and postmodernist writing strategies have tended to reproduce various norms and dichotomies. These include the dichotomies between language as matter or semiotic function; authorship and process; social constructions and unconstructed reality; and fiction and fact, for example. I argued that the transgression of these norms and limitations is prerequisite for developing a queer avant-garde writing practice and poetics in *Gaudy Bauble*.

The thesis begins to conceptualise and develop a new genre, agential realist fiction. Agential realist fiction intertwines and transforms the realms of practice and fiction. Working across writing method and content, I have distributed agency across networks of ontologically diverse actors, fictional and real, material and semiotic, human

and nonhuman, and transformed them through transliteracy. As the result of a performative writing practice, agential realist fiction subverts what conventionally might count as a mode of representation. For example, realism and antirealism derive from the presumption that representations are independent from any entities represented. On the contrary, agential realist fiction enacts the assumption that textual objects (subjects, and characters) are not primarily different to other material and semiotic entities in the world, and that they are causally and ontologically relational.

One of the initial challenges the research presented was situating my work within contemporary experimental literature. My long-term practice was shaped in a transdisciplinary context and, to that extent, at the margins of contemporary literature and literary theory (.iii). One of the contestations of the thesis is that the absence or lack of contemporary queer avant-garde novels (and, more generally, prose literature which is both, linguistically and narratively experimental) can be explained genealogically (.vi). Conceptual writing has extended and (over)emphasised the dichotomy between formal experimentation and innovative content which has shaped previous forms of avant-garde literature (.i; .v; 1.2). Arguably, the expanding field of conceptual writing has influenced writing practices beyond the field of poetry where first it emerged, indirectly engendering a generation of queer fictions that are not typically linguistically or formally explorative (.vi). Situating my work more explicitly within existing forms of experimental literature, I have foregrounded and developed aspects in my own practice that are relevant to current literary trends and debates. To an extent, I have brought my practice into alignment with contemporary forms of queer prose writing, emerging largely in the extended field of experimental poetry (Conrad, 2015, 2016, for example; see .vi). It will

be productive further to destabilise preconceived distinctions between poetry and prose in my future practice, so as to co-shape and participate in these debates.

The interdisciplinary approach and somewhat ambitious scope of this doctoral study posed further challenges. One of the concepts that underpins transliteracy is the “[t]he disciplined reading across disciplines” (Franklin, 2013, p. 8). This involved, at first, researching and understanding debates and concepts from science and technology studies on the one hand, and experimental writing on the other, in the respective disciplinary contexts in which they emerged; and secondly, developing their intersections as a literary analytics and a practice-led writing methodology. At times, the scope of the research meant compressing complex debates and controversies so as to identify general trends in either discipline. While the interdisciplinary approach might have come at the cost of a more nuanced and detailed discussion in certain parts of the thesis, it engendered an original and necessary analysis through which to develop my writing practice.

The thesis has opened up several potential research trajectories which I will map out in this concluding section. There is potential to develop transliteracy in the context of other forms of literature which I have not explicitly discussed in the thesis (pre-avant-garde forms of writing, for example (Rasula & McCaffery, 1998); or *écriture féminine*). Also, there is potential to develop transliteracy in close relation to a specific scientific experiment and analysis thereof, building on my more general and largely uncritical mobilisation of existing critiques of scientific experimentation. Further, transliteracy could be usefully employed as a conceptual apparatus, and offer insights into the processes that arguably are at work in all fictions.

I intend to extend transliteracy in the context of extracurricular, antidisciplinary, outsider, or marginal forms of experimentation. Partially inspired by this research, I co-founded *The Arrow Maker: A Journal for Language and Experimentation*¹²⁹ (with artist and printer Ruth Höflich). The first issue of *The Arrow Maker* was published in print in June 2015. Containing a combination of solicited and unsolicited materials, the journal will develop into a generative, text-based archive of subversive experimental practices.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO EXPERIMENT WITH MEANING-MAKING SYSTEMS, IN CHANGING CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS, WITHIN OR WITHOUT TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINARY LIMITATIONS? DOES GRASSROOTS EXPERIMENTATION STILL EXIST, AND IN WHAT FORMS. IN WHAT GARDEN SHEDS. WHAT MORE SUBVERSIVE FORMS OF EXPERIMENTATION HAPPEN IN LABORATORIES, UNIVERSITIES, TAX OFFICES, OR MORE RECLUSIVE SETTINGS? THE WELSH MOUNTAINS? WHAT MODEST EXPERIMENTALISMS, ON A WHAT MICROSCALES.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. WHO PRACTICES WHAT PRACTICES? THE ARROW MAKER BEING A PREDOMINATELY TEXTUAL MEDIUM, EXPERIMENTAL WRITING WILL BE OUR MAIN CONCERN. WHETHER WRITING IS THE EXPERIMENT, OR WHETHER A WRITTEN ACCOUNT IS GIVEN OF AN EXPERIMENT, OR BOTH. WHETHER YOU WRITE IN ENGLISH, OR IN TONGUES (DEAN, THIS ISSUE). WHETHER YOU ARE A MEDICAL DOCTOR SELF-EXPERIMENTING WITH SHAMANIC RITUALS (PLAYFORD, THIS ISSUE), OR WHETHER YOU INVENT A HYBRID CHARACTER IN FICTION WHO CONSISTS OF TWO HUMAN CHARACTERS, THE WOODEN STRUCTURE THEY CARRY AND AN ERRANT BIRD LANDING ON IT (WAIDNER, THIS ISSUE), OR WHETHER YOU DESIGN A SPECULATIVE THOUGHT EXPERIMENT ON TELEPORTATION (FULLER, THIS ISSUE). WHETHER YOU SUBVERT TAROLOGY (SISSU TARKA, THIS ISSUE), OR WHETHER YOU EXPLORE 19TH CENTURY PSYCHIC EXPERIMENTATION AND ITS EFFECTS ON CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY AND BEYOND (BLACKMAN, THIS ISSUE). WHETHER YOU CORRESPOND WITH YOUR NONHUMAN FAMILY MEMBERS ON A REGULAR BASIS (FRANKLIN & AHMED, THIS ISSUE), OR WHETHER YOU MANUFACTURE A DIY STRING INSTRUMENT IN ORDER TO ACCOMPANY THE RECITAL OF YOUR OWN POEM (PESTER, THIS ISSUE): INVENT YOUR EXPERIMENT, AND SUBMIT!

THE ARROW MAKER IS AN ANNUAL JOURNAL.
CO-EDITED BY RUTH HÖFLICH AND ISABEL WAIDNER, PUBLISHED AND
DESIGNED BY 8FOLD, PRINTED BY WERKSTATT HÖFLICH, AND MADE BY ITS
CONTRIBUTORS. THIS IS ISSUE #1.

**FICTIONAL SCENES OF
PROVOKED ENTANGLE-
MENT . EXPERIMENTS
ALWAYS EXCEED THE
HUMAN INDIVIDUAL.
PAY YOUR ATTENTIONS
BEYOND YOURSELF.
EXPERIMENTS INVOLVE
PRACTICE.**

Fig. 13 Extract from the editorial of The Arrow Maker #1 (Höflich & Waidner, 2015)

Also, I aim to extend the transdisciplinary orientation of transliteracy, and develop the practice in contexts such as performance studies (see .iii and .vi, where I have discussed queer avant-garde performance art as a major influence on my work). One of the

¹²⁹ Preliminary website for *The Arrow Maker*, including sample texts:
<https://waidner.org/2015/10/05/the-arrow-maker-journal-for-language-experimentation-eds-ruth-hoeflich-isabel-waidner/> [accessed 27 April 2016]

epigraphs of *Gaudy Bauble* is a quote from the lesbian performance group *Split Britches*'s play, *Belle Reprieve*: "And here we are romping around in the avant-garde and I don't know what else" (Bourne, Shaw, Shaw, & Weaver, 1991/1996, p. 179). Going forwards, I intend to explore "what else" there might be to the queer avant-garde *Split Britches* have been romping around in, in particular in view of the absence of a comparable genre in literature. What were the conditions of possibility for queer avant-garde performance art to emerge? What contexts have enabled and shaped the radically experimental, queer practices of Bird La Bird, Dickie Beau, David Hoyle, The Five Lesbian Brothers, Penny Arcade, and Split Britches, for example (see also .iii)? The research could take the shape of a collaborative or individual project, combining performance studies and avant-garde writing practices, and result in a new play, performance script, or a transdisciplinary hybrid text.

The primary research objective that emerged from the thesis is the development of the genre agential realist fiction in my future practice. The genre is in the forming stages in *Gaudy Bauble*, but it emerged as a clearly defined concept only after I completed the final draft of the novella. Going forwards, I intend to explore how agential realist fiction departs from historical works and devices, for example romans à clef and metafiction, that have incorporated factual and autobiographical material in the past. I will develop agential realist fiction in relation to the current trend to incorporate barely disguised personal experiences into innovative fictions. In her recently reissued novel *I love Dick* (1997/2016), for example, Chris Kraus narrates her, and her real-life ex-husband's, the French theorist Sylvère Lotringer, attraction to the equally real-life U.K. cultural theorist Dick Hebdige. In *Homage to the last Avant-garde* (2008), avant-garde poet Kent Johnson inserts himself, his friends and family members into encounters with

historical poets, for example. ("I was having dinner with Francis Picabia, Kurt Schwitters and the Count of Lautréamont" (p. 18)). Novelist Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* (2016) is a formally innovative reflection on her marriage to transgender artist Harry Dodge, motherhood, and U.S. queer theory. Maureen Duffy's *The Microcosm* (1966/1989) is a rare example of a queer avant-garde novel. Based on transcripts of interviews Duffy conducted in the 1960s, the novel began life as a nonfiction "treatment on female homosexuality" (p. 289). The transformation of the transcripts into a formally experimental, multi-voiced stream of consciousness became necessary when "no reputable [publishing] houses would commission [Duffy] to write a nonfiction book on such a risky subject" (ibid). Duffy rewrote the book as *The Microcosm*, employing form in order to encode, or camouflage, critically queer content, and to avoid censorship. More recently, I discovered CA Conrad's (2015, 2016) radically innovative prose poems that appear to incorporate personal context and a queer perspective. ("I tried dating a cute young anarchist puppeteer once who was never quite there when he was there" (2015, p. 200).)

Finally, in *Fantômas versus the multinational vampires* (1975/2014), Julio Cortázar collides and fictionalises his experience of attending the 1973 Russell Tribunal investigation of human rights violations, and the appearance of a Cortázar persona in a Mexican comic strip, *Fantômas*, released during the time. I have incorporated Cortázar's novella in the first piece of agential realist fiction I wrote after completing *Gaudy Bauble*, and during the final stages of completing the thesis. *Fantômas Takes Sutton* (Waidner, 2016) was accepted for publication by the online journal *3:AM* (July 2016), and I have included it here. There is a discernible development from *Gaudy Bauble* to *Fantômas Takes*

Sutton, I argue, and it will require future research to understand and specify the precise nature of the development.

Fantômas Takes Sutton¹³⁰ (Waidner, 2016)

To write through a character called Fantômas would be laughable. Coming from a 42-year-old novelist, and a lesbian at that. Infantile, also ill-advised. The self-infantilisation of the butch lesbian is proverbial as it is. (Picture a bale of butches watching a rerun of *Back to the Future* (1985), the science-fiction adventure comedy film.) I might boycott boy fictions like *Fantômas*. Already I have the appearance of a boy cussing the age of consent (from afar). I pass as a boy or a young man in Sutton. Only yesterday I accessorised my rolled up carrot leg type of trousers with orange socks. I came in for suburban abuse (verbal, poof). Despite a recent resurgence or renaissance of all things butch, I am transgendered. I descend from a pretty genealogy. Between 1911 and 1913, 32 *Fantômas* classic volumes were published in France. I have not read them. Not one. They are available on *Project Gutenberg* and, elsewhere on the net, as audio files. *Amazon UK* lists 24 available copies of *The Daughter of Fantômas/La Fille de Fantômas* (1911) alone. Condition: Used - very good. Allain & Souvestre, the original authors, wrote: "'Fantômas.' 'What did you say?' 'I said: Fantômas.' 'And what does that mean?'" (1911, p. 1) I don't know. I don't know what that means. Of 32 classic volumes I have yet to read one.

Reading or not reading *Fantômas* is not a question of age, nor gender. If reading *Fantômas* were a question of gender (which it is not), I would be your man. I have previously owned and listened to the self-titled debut LP of the experimental metal

¹³⁰ <http://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/fantomas-takes-sutton/>[accessed 7 July 2016]

supergroup, Fantômas. Fantômas are vocalist Mike Patton (Faith No More, Mr. Bungle), drummer Dave Lombardo (Slayer), guitarist Buzz Osborne (Melvins) and bassist Trevor Dunn (Mr. Bungle, Tomahawk). Fantômas are American and testosterone-fuelled. I had the T-shirt. Having listened to Fantômas's LP in the past, repeatedly, I no longer invest in it. At 42, I have learnt not to invest in misogynist forms of masculinity as reproduced in the avant-metal genre and the avant-metal subculture. Quentin Crisp, Patricia 'Bunny' O'Rooley, Peggy Shaw, Moj of the Antarctic, Campbell X, The Divine David, Bird la Bird and Lisa Blackman, as gender nonconforming role models, outperform Fantômas's band members hands down. In many respects, Sutton outperforms America hands down. Quentin Crisp (1908-1999) grew up in Sutton, for example. I wrote my novel *Gaudy Bauble* in Sutton (as well as in Cambridge, Clerkenwell and Crystal Palace). Like most Londoners, I am no longer in a position to live in London. I live in Sutton now.

In 2014, the American cult publisher Semiotext(e) newly translated and published Julio Cortázar's (1975) pamphlet *Fantômas contra los vampiros multinacionales*. Only yesterday Semiotext(e) requested an excerpt from *Gaudy Bauble* for their occasional intellectual magazine, *Animal Shelter*. During the 1960s, various Italo-Latin franchises reconfigured Fantômas as a Marxist superhero with homoerotic appeal. Issue 201 of the Mexican series included a Cortázar persona that "so amused the author that he produced a meta-text/pamphlet utilizing the comic's illustrations and plot structure" (Morse, 2014, *Frieze Vol. 166*). The author, Julio Cortázar, was rumoured to have been a closet gay or closet bisexual. He was rumoured to have died from AIDS on February 12th, 1984, foreshadowing my 10th birthday on the 14th. Were Julio Cortázar alive today, he might self-identify as transgender, postbinary or gender variant (preferred

pronouns: she/her). She might migrate to Sutton. She might assimilate culturally, and acquire a British passport, a sense of humour, a limp wrist, and transfeminist politics. Together, Julio and I might inaugurate a global renaissance of postmodernist fiction and, crucially, the advent of a queer avant-garde. *Si c'était Fantômas?* (1933) the people of Sutton might ask. (Sporadically, we might appear in public.) *Mais non! C'était Isabel & Julio*, international migrants. Purchasing a pack of wild clementines in *Morrisons*, Sutton, and a pack of spaghetti. They share a foreign publisher, they might say, Semiotext(e).

As an adult, I am resigned to the death of Julio Cortázar, his closeted life and his binary gender identity. I am resigned to the marginalisation of postmodernist experimental fictions by conceptual forms of writing. I am resigned to my personal incompatibility with Fantômas 1 & Fantômas 2, the classic French villain and the American avant-metal supergroup. I am resigned to the absence of feral raspberries in *Morrisons*, Sutton, but I am invested in Fantômas 3. First published in 1975, Cortázar's *Fantômas contra los vampiros multinacionales* takes as its theme the destruction of books, literature, libraries and humanity. Already libraries are decimated in Tory Britain, and global humanity is teetering on the brink. Only yesterday I wore a turquoise, yellow & beige *Walter van Beirendonck* poncho with thick fringe detail throughout. I wore the poncho with beige & pink trousers and chequered socks. I wore an oversized *Philip Treacy* hat and I coded 'poof' in Sutton. I am resigned to that, too. But Fantômas 3, a homoerotic, socialist superheroine, remains top of my suburban agenda.

GAUDY BAUBLE

ISABEL WAIDNER



ISABEL WAIDNER'S

GAUDY BAUBLE

A Novella for a Queer Avant-Garde

“The actors are not all ‘us’.” Donna Haraway, *The Promise of Monsters*, 1992

“Camp coup or butch putsch?” p. 149

“One cannot, however, safely invent an angel.” Jack Spicer, *The Unvert Manifesto*, 1956

“And here we are romping around in the avant-garde and I don’t know what else.” Split Britches, *Belle Reprieve*, 1991

©2016 Isabel Waidner



photo: self

Isabel Waidner is a middle-aged (born 1974) Londoner of German descent. She has published ~~two~~ volumes of fiction ~~and six of non-fiction~~. She ~~is a vegetarian~~ and campaigns ~~for the rights of other than human animals~~ as well as for the rights of writers (still widely treated as sub-human). She is an active trade unionist (a member of the Executive of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain) and, with her fellow-writer Maureen Duffy, ~~organised the campaign for British D.L.R.~~ She is married to Michael ~~Levy~~, a writer, publisher and Director of the National Endowment for the Arts, and has a grown-up daughter.

Chapters

1. TULEP
2. TRACEY BIRYUKOV LULIP
3. LOVEDAY
4. ORSUN URSOL
5. HILARY PARK
6. TRANSARMY
7. TULEP.TV
8. ROCKY BOBÀK
9. COLT
10. THE GOLDSEXUAL STATUETTE
11. PRINCESS DIANA MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN
12. *MÖRDERVERGEL*
13. ICY PET
14. THE AQUA-*BLEU*PENULTIMATE MODEL
15. PAINLEVÉ HYPERCAMP & AXOIOTTL
16. BELUA
17. BIKINI ATOLL
18. DEADWOOD-TO-DYNAMO AUDIENCE PRIZE
19. *EINE GANZ VORZÜGLICHE LEICHE: UN CADAVRE EXQUIS* AND BELOVED
20. SEASON FINALE
21. *PLATZE*, BO!

Appdx 1. TULEP.TV: THE COMPLETE SERIES

Appdx 2. P.I. LOVEDAY'S WALL CHARTS

1. TULEP

A formidable micro-horse sprang across a Formica tabletop. Ah, it's Tulep. Tulep sprang across grassgreen Formica, grazing, apparently. Besides, a white plastic laptop stood on the tabletop. Someone was maltreating its keyboard. Trailblazing, apparently. Trailblazer Belà Gotterbarm was wearing a chequered *Beirendonck* skirt, worse-for-wear trainers and tennis socks. She was wearing her soft-cotton Pegasus print sweater. The Pegasus on Belà's sweater reared and raised her wings. Pink flashes and green graffiti on extra soft cotton manifested Pegasus energy. On the other hand, Tulep was posturing atop the Formica tabletop like a formidable female stallion. The Pegasus on Belà's sweater was a winged horse, whereas Tulep was an ungulate budgerigar. Heh, Peggy! Tulep, heh. Raised pinions, Tulep was pawing Formica. Was this territorial posturing? A mutual 'Piss Off? Or a macho stand-off? Heh, Pegface! Tuleper, heh. But this was not a territorial stand-off. This was not *Highlander* (1986), the British fantasy action film. This was a get-together of disenfranchised things. This was a faggoty social. A working class knees-up. A cocky conspiracy? From Hoofed Winged Thing to Hoofed Winged Thing. From one Hoofed Winged Thing to another. From 'Chimera (genetics)' to 'Chimera (mythology)'. Peggy <3 Tulep. And Tulep <3 Peggy. They were giving each other ideas. And this was just the beginning.

Belà Gotterbarm wrote *Awangarda fikcja*. *Awkwardgarde* fiction, potentially trailblazing. In a 10th floor council flat on Harpur Street, WC1N, Belà's white plastic laptop stood atop the hound's-tooth Formica tabletop. Unaware of the faggoty social taking place under her nose, Belà was working on the script for a new 8-part television series, working title Querbird. Filming was due to get

underway ASAP. “ASAP,” director/producer Tracey B. Lulip had said. “Preferably yesterday.” Belà had promised a tone-and-*milieu*-setting, intrigue-inciting pilot by tomorrow afternoon.

In terms of the writing process, hound’s-tooth Formica and Belà’s pet bird proved influential, rather than Peggy the Pegasus, say. Confronting the bird/hound’s-tooth conundrum head-on, Belà invented a generic canary character. To Belà’s mind, the canary was the optimal birdhound, or birddog. Etymologically, ‘canary’ derives from Latin *canis*, genitive: *canarius*; see canine (n.). Belà typed the word ‘Canary’. Good. Querbird began like this: ‘Canary’. Canaries as a species originate from the Canary Islands, or “*Insula Canaria*, literally ‘Island of Dogs’, so called because large dogs lived there”. On the other hand, Tulep originated not from the Island of Dogs, but the Isle of Dogs in the East End of London. This, however, did not make Tulep a natural birddog. There was an excess of filly in her. A filly is a female foal. Also etymologically, the ‘Dog’ in the Isle of Dogs appears to be a corruption of a precedent ‘Duck’, as in the Isle of Ducks, or ‘Dyke’, as in the Isle of Super-Dykes. Tulep had dyke written all over her. Above filly, Tulep had dyke written all over her.

Belà’s second draft replaced the Canary, the optimal birddog, with of all things a budgerigar. Deleting ‘Canary’, Belà typed ‘Hoofed Budgerigar’. What? Why?! Tulep was not the optimal birddog! But this was the Pegasus off Belà’s sweater putting her foot down. This was Peggy the Pegasus throwing her weight behind Tulep. From Hoofed Winged Thing to Hoofed Winged Thing. From one Hoofed Winged Thing to another. This was the recently formed H.W.T. (Hoofed Winged Things) alliance exerting its influence. This was the H.W.T. alliance winging its way into the Querbird script. Was this a camp coup? A butch putsch? An attack on generic things? Mobilising working-class-knees-up resources, Peggy was as if electrified. Pink flashes surrounded her head.

Green graffiti. Peggy was so energetic. As well as H.W.T. solidarity, Peggy embodied a let's-go mentality. An appetite to get going. The phrase '*On y va!*' ran towards the hem of Belà's sweater in metallic lettering. Peggy was the bye-bye-saying, never-to-be-seen-again type of migrant Pegasus. This was Peggy, the let's-get-the-hell-out-of-here Pegasus. This was *Aufnimmerwiedersehen* Peggy. Peggy was raring to go and she was taking no prisoners. On her way out, Peggy walked all over the Querbird Canary. Peggy walked all over the generic Canary, paving the way for her Hoofed Winged Kin, Tulep.

This was bad news for the Querbird script. Bad news all round. After a promising start, Querbird was real-time derailing. Bye bye, generic Canary. Bye bye, optimal birddog. Belà Gotterbarm's second draft read like this:

'Querbird Pilot (Gotterbarm, 201X)

Hoofed Budgerigar Of The Isle Of Dogs.
Hoofed Budgerigar Off To Canary Wharf.
'? Goes To The Dogs.'

When Belà looked up from her laptop, Tulep was gone. Tulep?! Tulep! The window stood slightly ajar. Bird corrupted by flighty Pegasus? 'Hoofed Budgerigar Off To The Isle Of Dogs'? Off to the Isle of Super-Dykes, an imagined stronghold. An imagined Fire Island in the East End of London. An insular Old Compton Street, or Hebden-Bridge-by-the-Thames. Belà Gotterbarm dropped what she was doing and went after Tulep. Aborting Querbird, Belà undertook a significant costume change, and went after Tulep. This was not quite a camp coup, nor a butch putsch. But it was a beginning.

2. TRACEY BIRYUKOV LULIP

Tracey Biryukov Lulip lived in a 320 sq ft 10th floor council flat on Harpur Street, WC1N. Tracey had lived here since 1991. Tracey B. Lulip, she went by the name of Blulip. The name Blulip had stuck. The bell went. Blulip opened the door. Oh, hello! It was P.I. Belahg. Hello hello! From the beginning Tracey B. Lulip and P.I. Belahg resembled each other in a Gilbert & George kind of way. They were not quite the lesbian Gilbert Prousch (1943-) and George Passmore (1942-). They were not quite 'Singing and Living Sculptures'. Their heads were not covered in multi-coloured, metallised powders. Nor did they wear matching suits. Yet they resembled each other in a distinctly Gilbert & George kind of way.

Rather than matching suits, Blulip was wearing her azure-blue, white-mini-star T-shirt and her camouflage joggers from *Tesco*. P.I. Belahg was wearing her *Comme Des Garçons* shirt with Mexican-inspired pompom detailing fringing the button tab and the chest pocket with her *Y-3 Hero* joggers. Both P.I. Belahg and Blulip were wearing worse-for-wear *adidas* trainers and tennis socks. Blulip presented the P.I. with a foot high crudely carved object that looked like an idol, a deity, or a bludgeon. Belahg, look. On closer inspection, the object was a primitive model of a budgerigar, generously blue and white lacquered, with a crimson, a bloodstained? mouth? Healthy-lips, Blulip asserted. This was Healthy-lips, apparently. According to Blulip, Healthy-lips was the female lead of the forthcoming Querbird TV series. "Can I borrow a biro?" P.I. Belahg interjected. Thanks. P.I. Belahg wrote "Healthy-lips = female lead" onto the back of her hand. Also, Healthy-lips was Blulip's only reliable asset. I'll explain, Blulip said. Come into my workshop.

'Workshop' was another word for Blulip's 200 sq ft living-room/kitchen. A workbench covered in tools, wood chips and paint tubes backed onto the wall to the left. Ahead, a basic

kitchen unit. An electric oven. A mini-*Fridgette*[™]. A series of budgerigar figurines queued up like a biological development study behind the sink. “Healthy-lips’s stunt doubles,” Blulip explained. Amidst sketches, newspaper cut-outs, photos and postcards, a theatre backcloth depicting ‘Daylight’ was gaffer-taped to the wall. Nice view, Belahg said, looking out of the Critall window. Nice view. Tiny flat. And who are they? Blocking the sunlight? Who? Oh, they. Supporting cast, Blulip said.

A theatre backcloth depicting ‘Night’ was mounted to a stand blocking most of the Critall window. In the foreground, various fibreglass ungulates grazed the linoleum. Yes, they, P.I. Belahg said. I mean?! Hoofed Bear, Hoofed Cub, Hoofed Otter, Hoofed Owl, Hoofed Gazelle, Hoofed Pussycat, Hoofed Marmoset, Hoofed Afghan and Hoofed Cygnet were the Querbird supporting cast(s). They appeared to be grazing in front of the one million mini-star backcloth (‘Night’). For demonstration purposes, Blulip entered the scenery. Her analogous top, the mini-star T-shirt, worked to blend her in with the backcloth, apparently. Belahg, see? The T-shirt enabled her manually to animate the various ungulates without appearing on film. Blulip pulled a mini-star cap over her head. Belahg, look. Blulip manipulated Hoofed Otter. Your joggers, Belahg said. I hate to say. Blulip’s joggers and the backcloth clashed, foiling her camouflage. Not that there was a camera on set. There was no discernible camera on set.

According to Blulip, this was the low budget production of Querbird, a new TV series for Channel 4. No, let me rephrase this. Blulip rephrased this. This was not the low budget production of Querbird. This was a travesty. This was the Querbird production *real-time derailing*. In Socialist Britain, public-service TV broadcaster Channel 4 routinely commissioned diverse producers. In Socialist Britain, Channel 4 were committed to innovative and representative programming 24/7. Most of Querbird’s budget, however, had

gone. Most of Channel 4's dole had gone to one Belà Gotterbarm, Querbird's appointed writer. Belà Gotterbarm! Belahg exclaimed. Who had not heard of Belà Gotterbarm? *Awangarda fikcja* practioner. Agender feminist. P.I. Belahg, for one, was impressed. On the other hand, Blulip was unimpressed. Early on in the writing process, Belà's bird had run off, apparently. To Blulip-knew-not-where, Whitstable. Some lesbian *Hochburg*. Belà had gone after her bird. Not caring two hoots for Querbird, Belà had gone AWOL, Blulip said. Belà had aborted Querbird in its fledgling stages, landing her, Blulip, in it. What was Blulip to do without an adequate script, pluck something out of thin air? Make it up as she went along? Film first, story-board later? What about scenery, props, casting? What about a run-in period?

Alarmingly, Blulip had riffed on the script already. Rather than stall, Blulip had structured the pre-production process around Belà's Querbird fragment. "Based on this, I bought that." Based on lines such as 'Hoofed Bird Of The Isle Of Dogs' (Gotterbarm, 2019), Blulip had Google-searched 'Hoofed Bird', or 'Hoofed Budgerigar'. Something like that. An algorithm had shown results for **hoofed cygnet**. "Showing results for **hoofed cygnet**," it had said. Hence Blulip had come across the 'Hoofed Cygnet' probate sale. The 'Hoofed Cygnet' had been a themed pub in the Portsmouth area, or so. Blulip could not remember the details. She'd gone blank. Blulip had purchased the 'Hoofed Cygnet' probate on *eBay*, for cheap. So cheap, it had cost the seller to get rid.

Later, P.I. Belahg would attempt to reproduce the result, searching a number of items, such as 'hoofed animal' and 'Hoofed Budgerigar'. None of her searches would produce links relating to the 'Hoofed Cygnet' probate sale, nor the 'Hoofed Cygnet' pub near Portsmouth. Taxidermy, yes. Yes, DEER HOOF COAT HOOK (Free click and collect at Argos). Yes yes, Equimins™ Hoof Disinfectant Trigger Spray 500ml, *Numero Uno* for equine thrush infections. But

'Hoofed Cygnet' probate sale? 'Hoofed Cygnet' pub/bar/café? No. Nothing. The 'Hoofed Cygnet' probate sale had been a one-off result.

Shortly after, 9 life-size fibreglass sculptures had arrived at Blulip's on Harpur Street. Blulip had been having second thoughts ever since. Blulip had concerns that she should have gathered together half of the Querbird cast plus *on spec*. No mention of *them* in *this*. Belahg, have a read-through. Blulip picked up a single page print-out of Belà's Querbird manuscript. Have a read-through, why not. See for yourself. Blulip had concerns that most of her assets procured during pre-production should fail to appear in the original script. She had concerns that, to date, Healthy-lips should be the one *bona fide* Querbird on set. Even Healthy-lips's central status derived from a four-sentencer, literally. Let's have a look. P.I. Belahg took the script. 'Hoofed Budgerigar Of The Isle Of Dogs?! What do you mean, 'Hoofed Budgerigar Off To Canary Wharf? Bird Dogs Dykes? Seriously? Anyway, no, the P.I. said. No mention of Hoofed Marmoset. Nor Hoofed Pussycat. No mention of 'Night', nor 'Daytime'. P.I. Belahg agreed that Blulip's Querbird pre-production appeared to have veered off-*piste*. Blulip's pre-production departed from Belà's manuscript.

Blulip took her magic-cap off, looking Belahg straight in the eye. That's where you come in. Director/producer Tracey B. Lulip expected P.I. Belahg to come in at this point and relieve her predicament. Channel 4's cash could be lining P.I. Belahg's pockets, Blulip suggested. P.I. Belahg? Yes? Find Belà Gotterbarm and her runaway bird. Will you? Help the Querbird production get back on track? Don't worry, Tracey, Belahg replied. Channel 4's cash would be cash well spent.

3. LOVEDAY

Blulip registered with interest that P.I. Belahg moved herself in for the purpose of the investigation. P.I. Belahg had moved herself into Blulip's 320 sq ft council flat in WC1N. Already the Mexican-style pompom shirt hung over the back of the chair. Asked to elaborate on her strategy, P.I. Belahg declared that she objected to gungho operations, kneejerk manhunts, and heavy-handed detective work. Rollercoaster-frisking the Isle of Dogs, for example, was an operational no-go. P.I. Belahg preferred a methodological approach to forensics. At present, she was reluctant to push the investigation beyond certain conservative boundaries including the front door. Do consider the weather on the Isle of Dogs, Blulip. Have you heard of the British Summer? P.I. Belahg relaxed in her chair.

The bell went. Blulip opened the door. Hi. "Blue-Tit? P.I. Loveday, Holborn Detectives PLC." P.I. Loveday flashed a company ID card. Hi, really? Ok then. P.I. Loveday was a rival investigator. P.I. Loveday and Tracy B. Lulip did not resemble each other in a Gilbert & George kind of way. There was nothing Gilbert-&-George-like about P.I. Loveday and Tracy B. Lulip. Shall we discuss your case? P.I. Loveday said. I will record your statement on a digital Dictaphone. Blulip proceeded to detail the events effecting Querbird's derailment. Mid-sentence, P.I. Belahg chipped in. P.I. Belahg hijacked Blulip's statement, providing her own professional take on the case. According to P.I. Belahg, the Hoofed Budgerigar of the Querbird script and her incarnations in wood were their strongest connections to Tulep, thence the bare bones of the inquiry. In her view, red-lipper Healthy-lips constituted their primary investigative lead. Belahg showed Loveday the notation on the back of her hand. "It says 'female lead'," Loveday objected. Female lead, NOT investigative lead. P.I. Belahg did not flinch. "There's more," she continued. Red-lipper Healthy-lips was also a suspect, Belahg felt. The mouth

on her. What you think, Loveday. From P.I. to P.I.. Let's have a look, shall we. Belahg fetched Healthy-lips. What's this, Belahg said, examining her investigative lead in front of P.I. Loveday. Ah, a suction cup. Evidently, a silicone sucker had been superglued to Healthy-lips's base. A make-shift hoof that facilitates flying. Like this. PHUT. P.I. Belahg got on a chair, suckering Healthy-lips to the ceiling. Loveday, look! Healthy-lips hung headfirst from the ceiling. P.I. Loveday paused her digi-Dictaphone. What, are you nuts?! P.I. Loveday from Holborn Detectives PLC dismissed P.I. Belahg and her approach to forensics outright. P.I. Loveday preferred to speak to her client directly. "Blue-Tit," Loveday said to Blulip. "I am going to survey the bedroom." Oh. Ok. P.I. Loveday slipped on a pair of protective gloves and disposable overshoes. She excused herself. Nice view, she called from next door. P.I. Loveday took photographs to ensure that a permanent record existed of the site in the state in which it was found. She collected forensic evidence. She folded small, dry items in paper and sealed them in polythene bags. She sealed wet items in polythene bags for freezing, especially those containing potential biological samples. P.I. Loveday took notes and drew sketches. "Evidence 4.1.2. Grassgreen Formica/Hound's-tooth: vvvvv. Evidence 4.2. White Plastic MacBook ©1983-2009, Mac OS X. Evidence 4.3.1. Soft-cotton sweater with Pegasus print & '*On y va!*' inscription. Evidence 5.0. Fingerprints on White Plastic Keyboard (Evidence 4.2). Evidence 5.1. 1.5 cm diameter horseshoe footprints on hound's-tooth Formica (Evidence 4.1.2).

Next door, Healthy-lips swooped from the ceiling. Healthy-lips nosedived and headbutted Blulip in the mouth. What?! You ok? There was something the matter with Blulip's lip. You ok?! I'm oh-keh. Mere scratch. Barely throbbing, look. But blood did not stop from coming. Also, a tooth had come loose. Oh dear. Now there were tears, too.

P.I. Loveday returned to the living-room/workshop with her briefcase full. She sealed off the bedroom with three inch pink gaffer tape. Blue-Tit, Loveday addressed Blulip. "Keep out. No trespassing." P.I. Loveday expressed concerns over the potential contamination of the relevant site. They at Holborn Detectives PLC valued professionalism, apparently. Blue-Tit, P.I. Loveday said. Hm? What's with your face? Something wrong with your face. Blulip, let's go, Belahg interrupted. Now. In view of Blulip's bleeding from the mouth, Belahg insisted they visit A&E. Ok, P.I. Loveday said. I'll just wrap up in here. Leave me the keys, and I'll let myself out? No! P.I. Belahg cried. NO. No keys. Just shut the door behind you. Thank you. Good riddance. Then Belahg took Blulip to Guy's and St. Thomas's Dental Emergencies. Tower Wing, 21st floor.

4. ORSUN URSOL

Their breathless zoo fell all over themselves welcoming them back. Several members of their breathless fibreglass zoo appeared to have fallen over in Belahg and Blulip's absence. Apart from the pink cordon that sealed off the bedroom, there was no sign of P.I. Loveday at Blulip's on Harpur Street. Belahg and Blulip breathed a sigh of relief. Blulip had lost her Maxillary First Bicuspids (First Premolars), left upper 4. Also, Blulip had lost her Maxillary First Molar, left upper 6. Headbutted in the mouth by a nosediving budgerigar figurine. A propos, Belahg said, scanning the room. Where's Healthy-lips? No sign of Healthy-lips. But what's that? Fluorescent green chalk had appeared on the linoleum floor. Fluorescent green chalk outlined an unusually-shaped body on the workshop's linoleum floor. Neon-green, glow-in-the-dark, hi-vis speciality chalk outlined a molar-shaped body on the workshop's linoleum floor. The molar-shaped body was

surrounded by blood splatters. P.I. Belahg, for one, could not concentrate in this chaos. She could not function in this farrago. Blulip. Look at the state of it. Let's clear up. Help Hoofed Bear off the lino, for example. Help fallen Hoofed Cub stand up. Not to mention Hoofed Otter, Hoofed Owl, Hoofed Gazelle, Hoofed Afghan, Hoofed Cygnet, Hoofed Marmoset and Hoofed Pussycat. A cygnet is a baby swan. Is not detective work labelling work? Let's arrange these fibreglass animals in a meaningful order. Like P.I. Loveday might. What we got. Bear, Cub, Otter, Owl, Gazelle, Afghan, Cygnet, Marmoset and Pussycat. BEAR CUB OTTER OWL GAZELLE AFGHAN CYGNET MARMOSET PUSSYCAT?! This animal sequence might not signify to most people. This animal sequence might mean nothing to most people, but it signalled in full Technicolour rainbows to P.I. Belahg. Bear Cub Otter Owl Gazelle Afghan Cygnet Marmoset Pussycat. BCOOGACMP_OMG! These looked like the ghosts of Gayness Past. "Blulip," Belahg said. Hm? Where did you get these from, again? Internet. Not *eBay*, admittedly. *gayBay.co.uk*. Historical interior décor of a rural gay dive. The Gay Cygnet. Or The Hoofed Cygnet, Blulip could not remember. Portsmouth area, I told you. The Gay or Hoofed Cygnet had been closed down in 1991 at the height of the AIDS crisis. The police had worn neoprene surgical gloves to protect against the HIV virus. Wet wipes, moist towelettes. Following the forced closure, The Gay Cygnet's décor had been stored away in the landlord's garden-shed. The Gay Cygnet's landlord had been Faglord Cygnet. Faglord Cygnet had preferred a feminine pronoun at all cost. Recently, The Gay Cygnet's décor had been auctioned off as part of Faglord Cygnet's late estate. She had had no immediate descendants.

The Gay Cygnet's hysterical décor embodied a 1980s taxonomy that in return emblematised Post-Village-People gay stereotypes. This taxonomy had been the invention of newspaper columnist George Mazzei, whose *Who's Who at*

the Zoo? had been published in *The Advocate* (an “LGBT-interest magazine”) on July 26, 1979. Effectively, *Who’s Who at the Zoo?* had been a gay taxonomy, or as the original subtitle had had it, *A Glossary of Gay Animals*. The article had categorised homosexuals as Gay Bears, Owls, Cygnets, Pussycats, Gazelles, Afghans, and Marmosets. Predating for example *Bear Magazine*, which had not appeared until 1986, *Who’s Who at the Zoo?* had arguably inaugurated the Gay Bear identity category. Cub and Otter were subdivisions of the prolific Gay Bear identity category that had not featured in the original *Who’s Who*. Neither had Ursula featured in Mazzei’s *Who’s Who*. An Ursula was a lesbian-identified Bear or a Bear-identified lesbian. Was it true that post-identity Britain did not know what a Bear was. A large, hairy, butch, gay man, with “notably muscular legs” (Mazzei, 1979). Or what a Cub was. A younger, large, hairy, butch, gay man. An Otter. A less large, less hairy, gay man, whose age was irrelevant. Ursula derived from Latin *ursus*, for bear, and/or the Disney character, octopus sorceress, and *The Little Mermaid*’s main antagonist, Ursula. Beyond baby swan, ‘cygnet’ might not signify to most people. According to Mazzei (ibid), a Cygnet devoted his life to cultivating a perfect body and the sporting of *Gucci* loafers. Neoliberal Britain, however, was post that. Post-Cub, post-Otter, post-Ursula. Certainly post-Cygnet. Neoliberal Britain was post-identity before having learned the first thing about Cubs. Confounding post-identity Britain, gay taxa took centre stage in Blulip’s council flat/workshop. Gay taxa experienced *einen zweiten Frühling*. Flummoxing, consternating, insulting, disturbing and haunting post-identity Britain, lazarus taxa, things rampant, outstayed their welcome. Historical gay identities had taken control of the workshop! Also The King’s Arms on Old Compton Street. And The Duke of Wellington on Wardour Street. The Royal Vauxhall Tavern (RVT). And *Horse Meat Disco* at the manly Eagle on Kennington Lane. Bear culture was thriving in post-

identity Britain. And the Bears were recruiting. Historical fictions were alive in Blulip's DIY workshop and studio, and also The King's Arms on Old Compton.

"It's attitude that makes a Bear" (Mazzei, 1979).

In P.I. Belahg's view, the Male Owl should have been in a museum. The Male Owl should have been in the V&A. The Male Owl had lived, fought, and died for today's QUILTBAG (queer, undecided, intersex, lesbian, transsexual, bi-sexual, asexual, gay). Male Owl had kept camp alive in the face of adversity. Had kept herself alive at a personal cost. Post-identity Britain however was post that, and the V&A had not bid at The Gay Cygnet *gayBay* auction. The Gay Cygnet bargain sale. Post-identity Britain prefers to forget and get over both, the Male Owl and the gay past. To Belahg, the Male Owl had become an inspiration again. Long live the Male Owl. Whereas Blulip was not so sure.

Blulip's fibreglass taxa were hooved. A horse's foot is a horse's foot. Everything was equipped with a *Pferdefuss*. A *Pferdefuss* is a jinx or a drawback. *Pferdefüsse* wherever you looked. *Pferdefüsse* galore at Blulip's on Harpur Street. The *Pferdefüsse* signified certain longstanding, retrospective, and contemporary problems with Gay Bears, Cubs, and significant Otters. 1) The stereotyping. 2) Any inter/trans categories, anywhere? 3) Intersectionality? Race? Class? 4) Lesbians had been included in the *Who's Who* as a sort of afterthought. They had been mainly Owls, maybe Cygnets. As far as "gay women" (Mazzei, 1979) were concerned, none of the categories had really caught on. Ursula did not redress the derivative status of lesbians in Mazzei's Gay Zoo. Might the derivative status of lesbians have caused the unquestioned absence of the womanly Eagle on Kennington Lane? How many self-identified Ursulas per one-thousand Bears? Had there been a lesbian equivalent to the historical, hysterical, galvanising, generative, prolific, prohibitive, empowering, limiting, liberating, inclusive, exclusive, offensive

Gay Zoo? Had there been a Lesbian Zoo? There were lesbian taxonomies. But neither Blulip nor P.I. Belahg had heard of a Lesbian Zoo. Blulip, have you? No. No. You?! We could have been fruit flies. Jellyfish. Carnivorous plants. We could have been crystals. There could have been a Lesbian Toxicology. Mineralogy. There probably had been. There probably was.

P.I. Belahg deducted that Blulip's ungulates embodied a proto-queer genealogy *inklusive Pferdefuss*. She considered them critical taxa, with a heightened Ursuline disposition. For P.I. Belahg, their breathless zoo were the Ursuline Ungulates. For P.I. Belahg, Blulip's taxa were the new UUs. The new UUs were Not Quite a new animal. Not Quite a new taxonomy. Not on the level of a Lesbian Mineralogy. But. You know? A start. And who, by the way, is she?! Who's who? There on the floor, next to the bloodstain. Oh, her. Forget *Who's Who*. Who's she!?? Chalk is calcium carbonate or CaCO_3 . Chalk is porous rock. Chalk is a mineral. Excessively green pigmented.

Fluorescent green chalk outlined an unusually-shaped body on the workshop's linoleum floor. Neon-green, glow-in-the-dark, hi-vis speciality chalk contoured what resembled the reversed flower of a toxic tulip on Blulip's linoleum floor. Toxic Tulep?! Not Tulep. Tulip. The contours of a toxic flower had appeared on linoleum. They were practically identical to the contours of the classic icon of a trivialised ghost. Looked like the Pac-Man™ 8-bit green phantom. Rather than the Pink Pac-Man Ghost Machibuse, or the Cyan Pac-Man Ghost Kimagure, this looked like Greenish-Grey Orson. Hello Orson, you greenish-grey, intellectual Ghost. *Was hast du hier verloren?* Allegedly, T. Iwatani, the Japanese video game designer and Pac-Man creator, had "designed each Pac-Man Ghost with its own distinct personality" (Wiki). Greenish-grey Orson shared with every other Pac-Man Ghost the distinct shape of a human molar. Two to four stumps under a bulbous body. But this was not Orson. This was Orsun Ursol. Orsun

Ursol haunted the new UUs. Phantom of the Past's Prohibited Futures. Ghost of Taxonomies Yet-to-Come. Millions of taxa would diversify any future taxonomy to the extreme. This was Orsun Ursol, gender-transcender and defender of the *she* pronoun. Neon-green agent of *nouveau-she*. *Nouveau she-chique*. Orsun Ursol took part in the ongoing insurrections of disenfranchised things. She was in cahoots with Peggy and Tulep. Also Healthy-lips, for that matter (where was Healthy-lips?). Orsun Ursol, you say? CaCO_3 ? Blulip touched her with the tip of her trainer. Blulip tested her with the tip of her trainer. You're smudging her, Belahg said. Orsun's third foot had already gone. P.I. Belahg fetched her smartphone lest Orsun Ursol disappear without record. P.I. Belahg filmed Orsun Ursol on her smartphone. "Chalk faery," Blulip said. "It's the scrawl of a chalk faery." It's high-visibility chalk, outlining forensic evidence. It's the chalk outline of a body, like those you see on TV.

A 1996 police audit noted that outlined bodies on TV have taken their toll on modern homicide investigations. Outlining a dead body with chalk or high visibility tape has never been part of official police procedure. Police officers enacting the popular trope has lead to a proliferation in so-called 'chalk faery' contamination of crime scenes with a foreign substance. On rare occasions, officers might have contoured the body or body part at the request of press photographers. The police might have drawn a chalk outline around a body for the press, facilitating family-friendly portrayals of crime scenes. The press had embraced the chalk outline, and so had the detective genre. "The first time an outline of a body was shown on a television series was in the 1958 Perry Mason episode *The Case Of The Perjured Parrot*"(Wiki). Subsequently the chalk outline had become one of TV's classic tropes, effecting the real world chalk faery proliferation described in the 1996 police audit. Heh, Blulip, Belahg said. Rival investigator Loveday might have contaminated the workshop in our absence. Just

saying, P.I. Loveday might have outlined and removed the original body part, Blulip's Maxillary First Molar. Blulip, you know your Maxillary First Molar? Where is it? Exactly. Go figure. Chalk faery Orsun Ursol here replaced Blulip's Maxillary First Molar. That was P.I. Belahg's professional guess. *Et zut alors, da haben wir den Salat.* Another character/suspect to reckon with and to consider. Investigative/Post-Binary lead? What you think, Blulip?

Deriving from an Ursuline genealogy, spliced with Iwatani's Orson and a helping of faery dust, Orsun Ursol revitalised a jinxed taxonomy through alien contamination. Orsun Ursol revitalised the new UUs, their bodily incarnation of a proto-queer past including its problems, through extra-taxonomic freak contamination. Orsun Ursol revitalised an already contaminated taxonomy through her mineral, digital, media-friendly, computer-gamely, ghostly, intellectual, neon-green, neo-pomp, *nouveau-she-chique* version of extra-taxonomic alien contamination. Maybe Orsun was a little flat yet. But she was bound to come alive like everyone else had.

But where was Healthy-lips in all of this? Where was the volatile budgerigar in relation to 'The Perjured Parrot'? Where in relation to Orsun Ursol? Oh, there! There she was. Suction-cupped to the wall, all the way over there by the kitchen sink. Miles off, really. Healthy-lips was miles away from Orsun Ursol's transgender promise. In terms of the investigation, P.I. Belahg was fairly confident that Tulep, too, was miles away. Probably Tulep was roaming the Isle of Super-Dykes. That was the kind of old-fashioned bird she was. On that note, Belahg called it a day. Goodnight, Blulip. Goodnight, Belahg. Kiss kiss. Belahg lay down on the floor alongside the kitchenette.

Blulip stayed up. The effect of the anaesthetic receded. Orsun Ursol appeared a little less neon-green now. A little more greyish-green. Blulip's thoughts turned to Querbird, her TV series. Amidst queer taxonomies, the new UUs, vanishing

Maxillary First Molars and Orsun Ursol, Blulip's thoughts turned to her TV show. On top of Blulip's own improvisations on the script, P.I. Belagh's investigation was interfering with the pre-production process. Also P.I. Loveday's investigation was interfering with the pre-production process, promoting unchecked development, wilderness and radical off-*piste*ing in terms of the Querbird script. Diversiform investigations were coconspiring to facilitate the conditions for a proliferation of disenfranchised things in the workshop on Harpur Steet. Riffraff had been running the show from the word go, and they had no regard for the script. They were ever so cocky. They were so prolific. It was questionable whether Blulip's production could ever return to a script. Especially now they had started filming.

6. TRANSARMY

Today, P.I. Belagh was wearing her question-mark spangled turtleneck jumper. The blue/green striped turtleneck jumper depicted an army of identical heads in left profile. Red question marks covered or compressed the left-facing heads helmet-like, or clamp-like. A red, left-facing question-mark nestled against each left-facing head from behind. "RAF DEMONS/ BLUE & GREEN WOOL PATTERNED TURTLENECK 32287M054002 Long sleeve slim-fit 100% merino wool jumper. Blue/green striped. Head and question-mark pattern throughout in red and orange. Turtleneck collar. Ribbed cuffs and hem. Tonal stitching. Hand wash. Made in Belgium." This was a transgender army. This was an FtM (Female to Male)/TG (TransGender) army and peace corps. Many were young. Many were pretty. There were many of them. The head furthest left in the first row from the top was called Nigel. The second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth

heads in the first row from the top were called Ralph, Helmut, Fadel, Hugo, Iqbar, Manfred, Issy, and Koljacz. Issy fancied the back of Koljacz's head. Ralph fancied Helmut from behind. At first, Manfred did not fancy the new UU Pussycat. Pussycats were not what he usually went for. Neither did Helmut fancy the Ursuline Bear, who for all he knew might make mincemeat out of him. At first, it looked like the FtM/TG army were cold-shouldering the new UUs. They were looking the other way. While Belahg was charging her smartphone in the socket by the sink, the FtM/TG army were looking away from the new UUs. They were looking the exact opposite way. Belahg, too, was looking the exact opposite way. Everyone had had enough of the ancient *Pferdefüsse*. But when Belahg turned her attention to the new UUs and started individually to record them, the FtM/TG army did a collective U-ey. They could not help but do a U-ey. They did a U-ey because this was an FtM/TG army equipped with miracle question-mark hats. They had a keen interest. Look at Nigel, for example, wearing his question-mark hat. Bristling with herbal testosterone. The FtM/TG army wanted to know their queer history. They wanted to learn about queer before queer. They wanted to know their pioneers, and situate their new interventions on transgenerational trans-alliances. So Iqbar did a U-ey. Koljacz did a U-ey. Hugo did a U-ey. And they attacked the new UUs with love. The FtM/TG army tackled the new UUs with love. Conversely, the new UUs tackled the FtM/TG army with love and inquisitive desire. It was not pretty. This was the *Schlachtfeld d'Amour*, the battlefield of love. After hours of engagement, Fadel developed a taste for the new UU Marmoset. Manfred took a special liking to the n-UU Afghan. Whereas Ralph continued to fancy Helmut from behind. On the other hand, Issy fell over himself for Ursol Orsun. Koljacz, too, fell over himself for Ursol Orsun. Whereas Nigel liked heterosexual women, but there weren't any. Far and wide, this was a heterosexual desert. It was not

always pretty on the battlefield of love. In fact, it looked for a while as though they might slit each other's throats. Through the lens of Belahg's smartphone, it looked as though the FtM/TGs and the new UUs might slit each other's throats. Eternal turf wars.

Between 5 and 6am the battle peaked. Blulip was asleep whilst P.I. Belahg was filming. Like P.I. Loveday, P.I. Belahg was committed to maintaining an up-to-date record of the relevant scene. Having recorded the new UUs at length, P.I. Belahg turned her attention to Healthy-lips. Where was Healthy-lips, her investigative lead? Ah, there. Healthy-lips was standing tall on her singular hoof on the workbench. She looked different today. Had Healthy-lips had an overnight overhaul? A new human bicuspid shone forth beneath Healthy-lips's beak. Immediately, the FtM/TG army were all over Healthy-lips. The young ones were all over Healthy-lips now. The frontline shifted as Belahg redirected her focus. The frontline now grazed the edge of Healthy-lips's suction-cup. Already Helmut tackled Healthy-lips with love and inquisitive desire. Iqbar tackled Healthy-lips with love and inquisitive desire. Who are you Healthy-lips, Hugo asked. Who are you today? Baring your tooth like that. What have you become? Healthy-lips had become a battle-axe overnight. Healthy-lips had become a seasoned battle-axe overnight. A hatchet-wielding, uncompromising, unflinching and no-shit-taking battle-axe. A double-bladed-battle-axe-wielding battle-axe. Combat-tested, and combat-ready. Rigged for the *Schlachtfeld d'Amour*, Healthy-lips was taking no chances. She was ready for horseplay.

Healthy-lips's new and superior tooth stood out against a background of maroon and crimson. Lately, maroon had been mixing with crimson around Healthy-lips's beak. Healthy-lips's mouth. Healthy-lips's lips. Healthy-lips was so anthropomorphic. Healthy-lips, why are you so anthropomorphic? Why are you combat-tested. What battles

have you fought? Nigel, Ralph, Helmut, Fadel, Hugo, Iqbar, Manfred, Issy, and Koljacz were all over Healthy-lips. Eventually, Blulip got up. Good morning, Belahg *et al!* Good morning, Blulip. P.I. Belahg asked Blulip whether Healthy-lips had been wounded during her battles. P.I. Belahg asked Blulip whether Healthy-lips (during her battles) had lost a lot of blood from the mouth. Blulip shook her head. No. No, Healthy-lips was fine, Blulip replied. If anything, *Blulip* had lost a lot of blood from the mouth during *her* recent battles. "It's maroon-coloured wood glue," Blulip reassured Belahg re. Healthy-lips's suspected blood loss. This, there, around Healthy-lips's mouth, was maroon-coloured wood glue. Maroon-coloured wood glue applied to the reverse of a Maxillary First Bicuspid. The wood glue had smudged a bit. While Belahg had been asleep, Blulip had modified Healthy-lips. Blulip had glued her ex-Maxillary First Bicuspid under Healthy-lips's beak. The accident that had lost Blulip her Maxillary First Bicuspid had also lost her her Maxillary First Molar. The latter had been snatched by the chalk faery. Blulip had managed to recover the former from the linoleum floor. Blulip had glued the one tooth that she had lost and that had not been snatched by the chalk faery to Healthy-lips's mouth. Blulip had glued her ex-tooth under Healthy-lips's mouth and turned her into a glorious battle-axe. Strong female lead, Blulip figured. Nigel appeared to agree.


P.I. Belahg was not so sure. She contemplated her investigative lead. Thanks to her newfangled canine, Healthy-lips signified birddog in garish colours. In view of this latest development, P.I. Belahg suspected that Tulep had gone to the Isle of Dogs, or, in fact, to the Canary Islands. On the one hand, P.I. Belahg did not think a significant transgender presence on the Isle of Dogs likely. She thought a significant transgender exodus from the Isle of Dogs more likely. On the other hand, performer/director Graham Tornado had problematised transgender presence on the Isle of Dogs's

Samuda Housing Estate in her film YHBW (2002). And an “uncompleted film scheduled to star Harvey Keitel” (Wiki) had been shot on the same Isle of Dogs Housing Estate, Harvey Keitel being a popular drag king meme in the 1990s. In February 2015, 16-year-old Lola Rodriguez was the first transgender minor to be nominated for Las Palmas Carnival Queen, Gran Canaria. It was with the one or the other destination in mind, Isle of Dogs or Gran Canaria, that P.I. Belahg suggested they go get some fresh air.




5. HILARY PARK


The neon-green carpet disintegrated on the forest floor rapidly. The way things were going, it would be integrated in its environment within weeks. Whereas the rare flock of sheep *on* the carpet had epigenetically adapted for centuries, alas to another environment. The species had adapted to a faraway rock off the Canarian archipelago. Their rock was surrounded by ocean. No grass grew on it. Over time, the flock had developed an unorthodox physiology hence the ability to metabolise seaweed efficiently. Psychic suction-cups under their hooves had optimised kinaesthesia on their native rock’s pebble beach. But this was no pebble beach. This was a forest, *der Schwarzwald*, perhaps, or the Bolivian rain forest. The forest was nowhere near the Canarian archipelago. This was a landlocked state. No ocean for miles. Psychicorporeally disorientated, the flock *stand da wie der Ochs vor dem Berg*. The flock was petrified. Petrification clouded their acrylic ‘flex’ eyes. The flock was famished. In this sense, the neon-green carpet was a godsend. It was dyed in a blue-algae derivative. It worked like a survival biscuit for Canarian sheep. Notwithstanding the aftertaste, the flock licked alpaca-mix fibre with gusto. ‘Sponsored by *KHelp™*’ was printed on the neon-green carpet. *KHelp™* should not have replaced a well-


balanced diet, but on the occasion it did. It just took the edge off.


Who were these new Ewes!? Who were these new Ewes, in what forest?! Any relation to the new UUs at home? Was this a feint? A red herring? Was this the Ewe Forest? But this was not the Ewe Forest. This was not the Black Forest, nor Epping Forest, nor the Bolivian Rain Forest. This was Contamino Park. Impurity Park. Litterland. Carpetland. Unnature Park. Diaspora Park. Desperado Park. Bare-Survival Park. Triumph-over-Tragedy Park. *KHelped*[™] Park. This was a sponsored window display on Gray's Inn Road, WC1X. Contamino Park was a new taxidermy overcrowding the shop window of  Head Office.



PLC was an ethical recycling agency for dead animal material. A Private Limited Company,  PLC was an ethical intermediary agency for dead pets, pet parts, and dead animal collectives. Nothing on an industrial scale. With the help of a sponsor (*KHelp*[™], a new algae-based soft drink), Contamino Park was designed to exemplify taxidermy as a practical PetCycle application. Contamino Park exemplified how PetCycling might work for 'you and your pet', to quote from the exhibit label in the shop window. Besides, Contamino Park was designed to promote the sponsor. P.I. Belahg and Blulip came along. They passed  Head Office, a 110 sq ft shop on Gray's Inn Road, WC1X, a stone's throw from Harpur Street, WC1N. The sight of the new window display stopped them in their tracks. Blulip! Hm? Who are these new Ewes?! New UUs/new Ewes, any relation? As soon as P.I. Belahg had caught sight of the new Ewes, she had known she was onto something. Forget the Canaries. Forget the Isle of Dogs. P.I. Belahg had arrived. A bell rang as they entered  HO. "Who are they," P.I. Belahg asked re.


‘Contamio Park’. “The new Ewes?!” “As good as new,” a voice came from within the *faux*-forest. “PetCycled.” Behind liana festoons, cardboard palm trees and a real-life office plant, Hilary Park emerged. Park is a Korean surname. Hilary ran  PLC, had done for years. She was wearing rolled-up jeans and a T-shirt promoting the LGBTQI action group Helper Cell. Set of keys on her belt loop. Cherry-red *DMs*. Hilary was wearing a stylish *Nasir Mazhar* cap with a high-camp pencil holder attached to one side. Under the cap, short hair gelled back. Drop of gel in it. Hello, Blulip thought. A butch, Belahg thought. Butcher than Belahg, Blulip thought. Belahg isn’t butch at all. Hello, Belahg, said Hilary Park. Belahg, Blulip, hello hello. Nice to see you together. So Gilbert-and-George-like. How is Querbird coming along? Hilary knew about Blulip’s foray into DIY television. Not without difficulties, Blulip responded. That’s always the way. Isn’t that always the way. On the wall behind Hilary, Belahg saw an A4 poster promoting Blulip’s forthcoming Querbird TV series. It had all the right names on it, the necessary credentials. Blulip did not volunteer the fact that the billed author had dropped out of the production. The show had lost its ‘name’, but Hilary Park was not to know.

Hilary Park had started  PLC at age 19, from nothing. For 25 years, PetCycle had been facilitating the post-mortem repurposing of pre-compost pets. Hilary’s inspiration for PetCycle had been a German PET bottle recycling system, PETCYCLE, that had an almost 100% return rate. PET stands for Polyethylene Terephthalate, a polymer resin of the polyester family and constituent of most plastic bottles. Over the last few years, Hilary’s PetCycle had skyrocketed in terms of popularity. Like the German PET bottle recycling system, Hilary’s PetCycle harnessed popular anti-waste sentiments. Think fossil fuel shortage. Energy crisis. The depleted planet. Think carpet-licking era. *Haute-cuisine*-like, PetCycle

harnessed a middle class preoccupation with 'utilising every bit of the animal'. There was afterlife in the old dog yet. Think animal fat transformed into biodiesel. PetCycling appealed to pet owners who lacked a back garden. For many, PetCycling compared favourably to burying the dog in a Brockwell Park flowerbed, having her cremated at the Walworth Road vet's, or dumping her in a bin on Tulse Hill. PetCycling was like *Freecycling*, but ethically supervised. Monthly rotating showcases at  HO illustrated specific PetCycle applications. September 2019: Contamino Park. Tannin, sheepskins, acrylic 'flex' eyes, polyurethane, iron, alpaca-acrylic textile. And courtesy of our sponsor, a free bottle of *KHelp™* per visitor.

In the absence of a Lesbian Zoo, Contamino Park was second best. This, here, was P.I. Belahg in action. When it mattered, she was on it. P.I. Belahg got her smartphone out. Hilary, look. Belahg showed yesterday's recording to Hilary. "Who's she?" Hilary asked, meaning Orsun Ursol. "I'm asking you," Belahg replied. "You know her?" Hilary tapped her *Nasir Mazhar* cap with high-camp side pencil holder. Mh-mm. Hilary did not know what to suggest in terms of Orsun Ursol, other than to look for her down Brighton pier or Leicester Square Trocadero. Blulip clarified that this was not Orson, Pac-Man's greenish-grey intellectual ghost. This was Orsun Ursol, gender-transcender with faery flair. "I see," Hilary said, "and who's she?" Hilary was referring to Healthy-lips in the background. Oh, Healthy-lips. That's Healthy-lips. Investigative lead, Belahg said. "*Female* lead," Blulip rectified. Blulip preferred to refer to Healthy-lips as the female lead of her TV show. Suddenly Hilary had an idea re Orsun Ursol. It just came to her. Hilary had an idea re whatshername, Orsul Ursona. Gender-transcending tooth faery Orsun Ursol reminded Hilary Park of her lover Rocky Bobák. Orsul reminded Hilary of Bobák for not one, but two reasons. 1)

Rocky Bobák was a radical gender practitioner. 2) Rocky Bobák was a radical dental practitioner. Hilary realised that she saw Bobák in Orsun. Hilary could not now look at Orsun without seeing Bobák. Hilary wrote down Bobák's address. 221 Brixton Hill, SW2. Streatham end. "Stay for the launch of Contamino Park?" Hilary asked. Would love to, but could not. Blulip and Belahg would have loved to stay, but they had to go. TV series to produce. Investigation to conduct. *On y va!* They really did have to go. Ok, bye. Bye bye. They left.

The neon-green carpet disintegrated on the floor of  HO. The *faux*-forest looked appropriately wild. The new Ewes had been mounted professionally. Their tongues were stapled through the carpet. Their hooves were screwed to the floor. For the duration of the Contamino Park installation, they were set to stay put. They were unlikely to fall over or lean. Nor were they likely to leap, saunter or gallop. Unlike Peggy the Pegasus, say, the new Ewes did not ooze *Wanderlust*. Thus it came as a surprise that a new micro-Ewe should be racing across the alpaca-mix carpet. Hilary Park had not expected to find a new micro-Ewe race across the carpet, circling the palm tree props. Not on the eve of the launch she had not. Circa 10 cm in height, the micro-Ewe had a pastel-blue tail-feather. She had tiny hooves. She sprang across the carpet, grazing, apparently. Alpaca-mix fibre was largely inedible, but the neon-green dye was nutrient dense and bioabsorbable. A blue-algae derivative, the dye contained 65 vitamins, minerals and enzymes, eight essential amino acids and ten nonessential amino acids. Spirulina and aphanizomenon flos-aquae are blue-green algae. Kelps are brown algae. The new micro-Ewe might be seen to inject a little life into the Contamino Park installation. She might be considered the life and soul of the Contamino Party. Something a little less static might lift the Contamino piece. Contamino Park might benefit from some movement. This

was the theory. In reality, the Contamino Park animation perturbed and perplexed. Faced with the unlikely micro-Ewe, Hilary Park adjusted her *Nasir Mazhar* cap with the side pencil holder. She looked away and looked back again. The micro-Ewe was still there. Actually, Hilary thought she was seeing things. She re-adjusted her *Nasir Mazhar* cap with high camp side pencil holder for reassurance.

7. TULEP.TV

At Belahg and Blulip's on Harpur Street, the white plastic laptop had moved to the workbench. Tracey B. Lulip was four-finger typing. She registered the domain name Tulep.tv. She installed video streaming software and built a basic website to host a digital TV channel. Blulip ditched the name Querbird. The way her series was going, it would not get a look in at Channel 4. Blulip did not think that her most recent work would wash with Channel 4, not even in Socialist Britain. First, Blulip uploaded the Orsun Ursol footage as per open access trial run. Blulip labelled the footage 'Episode 1', or the *1st Episode*. The *1st Episode* featured chalk/tooth faery Orsun Ursol in improbable detail. Next, Blulip uploaded 'Episode 2', or the *2nd Episode*. No good sitting on your best material. The *2nd Episode* showcased the FtM/TG army in the context of the new UUs and Healthy-lips. Its subtitle: '*Battala d'Amour*'. Wow. What now. Contrary to Channel 4, Tulep.tv's audience reach was zero by default. Without promotion, any content would disappear down the open access black hole. Hence Blulip announced the 'soft launch' of Tulep.tv via her mailing list. Dear Fags and Colleagues. Here's Tulep.tv. Watch the *1st* and *2nd Episodes* now, or catch up later. New episodes every week. Please mark as Not Spam. All Pest, Tracey B. Lulip, Director-General. blulip@tulep.tv.

In fact, Tulep.tv's 1st and 2nd *Episodes* reached a number of viewers, including one ex-mailing list viewer, P.I. Loveday from Holborn Detectives PLC. In keeping with her text-book approach to detective work, P.I. Loveday googled 'Tulep' daily. Hourly. Usually, a link referring to a Turning Lane Extension Project came up, claiming that "TuLEPs are back in active development". Usually, that was it. P.I. Loveday was so surprised when Tulep.tv first came up. Tulep.tv's current and future episodes would form the basis of Loveday's analytic approach. Also, P.I. Loveday googled 'Gotterbarn' daily. 'Zahnarztpraxis Dr. Gotterbarn', a dental practice for "integrative Zahnmedizin" in Hamburg came up: "Für schöne und gesunde Zähne." [accessed 21st September 2019] Like the Turning Lane Extension Project, P.I. Loveday dismissed this result as insignificant.

8. ROCKY BOBÁK

Black letters across the shop's brown façade confirmed that this was the NHS *Dental Repair Shop Rocky Bobák*. This was the NHS *Dental Repair Shop Rocky Bobák*, rather than a funeral parlour or a pawnshop, say. The brown façade suggested a pawnshop, but black letters confirmed that this was the NHS *Dental Repair Shop* ____k____ák, or _____
____air____hop____k____ák. Several letters were missing. Self-adhesive film furled up in both bottom corners of the shop window, should have said: formerly self-adhesive film furled up. Ok, Blulip said. Let's go in. You first, Belahg said. No, you, Blulip responded. Together? Ok.

Today, Belahg was wearing her question-marks jumper with her Y-3 *Hero* joggers. Blulip was wearing her *Christopher Ala* white/orange shark-print T-shirt with her camouflage patterned joggers from *Tesco*. From *Christopher Ala's* AW15 collection, Blulip's T-shirt featured tiny sharks


swimming in concentric circles. Wonderfully soft cotton, and a bold shark print throughout. Inside the *Dental Repair Shop*, Blulip, Belahg *et al* encountered an NHS self-service check-in kiosk. Hello, this might take a while. Blulip did not have her appointment letter with her. Neither did Ralph, Helmut, Fadel, Hugo, Iqbar, Manfred, Nigel, Issy and Koljacz from the FtM/TG collective have their appointment letters at hand. The sharks were without appointment letters between them. Not to mention Belahg. Belahg suggested that Blulip go first. Together? Blulip asked. No. You're on your own. Ok then, Blulip said. The self-service check-in kiosk asked Blulip for her name. Blulip typed 'Tracey Biryukov Lulip', her full name. The kiosk asked whether Blulip was male or female and what were her ambitions. Blulip responded by entering a 'Spinning Heart' emoticon. The kiosk, in return, proliferated 'Triple Heart' emoticons on its screen. Then it crashed.

Belahg, Blulip, Ralph, Helmut, Fadel, Hugo, Iqbar, Manfred, Nigel, Issy, Koljacz and hundreds of sharks entered the *DRS* waiting room. Dental glue fumes stalled the breath reflex. Circa thirty *DRS* patients lined the walls, waiting for their turn and the return of their dentures. Avoiding interaction and eye contact (try saying ts, or pf, without dentures), the patients concentrated on an unusual Art Deco tessellation design on the waiting room carpet.

Belahg and Blulip sat down on adjacent chairs. Blulip, look! Hm? There! Where? Belahg gestured towards the shop window that connected the waiting room via brown self-adhesive film to Brixton Hill. At a desk in the shop window, Rocky Bobák was fixing dental prosthetics. Rocky Bobák was wearing joggers, T-shirt, and *adidas* trainers. She had glasses on. Blulip, see? Oh yeah. With a specialist spatula, Rocky Bobák was applying *Fixodent™* denture glue to the cracked Perspex palate of a partial denture. Dental paraphernalia littered the desk's work surface. Sixteen pots of *Fixodent™* in as many colours did not cover the *DRS*'s clientele's gum

complexion spectrum. Now Bobák scrutinised the partial denture in the light of a desk lamp. Shiny metal strands as well as a single incisor extended from the denture's Perspex component. It resembled a fleshy mass, or a dermoid cyst complete with ingrown grey hair and tooth. Must feel like barbed wire in the mouth, Blulip imagined, remembering the gaps in her own teeth. Seemingly satisfied with her handiwork, Bobák left the glued denture to dry. She looked up the next patient on her laptop. DOB 12/12/1965. "That's us," Belahg said to Blulip.

Bobák looked for Blulip's files on her laptop. Can I help? Bobák looked at Belahg and Blulip. Who are you, Gilbert and George? And who are they. FtM/TG army or peace corps, Belahg said a propos Bobák's second question. Some of the generally disenfranchised powers that ran this show. Ah ok, Bobák said. Hilary sent us, Belahg said. Hilaire! Bobák cried.

Did you go to the launch of Contamino Park at  HO last night? No, you? No. Anyway. Hilary thought you might be able to help. Streaming Tulep.tv on her smartphone, P.I. Belahg played Bobák the 2nd *Episode* first. What's this, Bobák asked. Healthy-lips, you say? Strong peg. Can I buy her? Great on my desk. Would make for a nice *DRS* mascot, patron saint, *Leitfigur*. How much? And what's this, looks nasty. Oh this, Belahg said. The battlefied *d'Amour*. What?! The battlefied *d'Amour*?! Ralph, Helmut, Fadel, Hugo, Iqbar, Manfred, Nigel, Issy and Koljacz kept quiet. Then P.I. Belagh showed Bobák the footage of Orsun Ursol. Hilary thought you might recognise her? No, Bobák did not recognise Orsun Ursol. However, Orsun Ursol reminded Rocky Bobák of Rocket Bazcjk. Rocket Bazcjk was Rocky Bobák's *nouveau*-drag alter ego. The way that Orsun had painted her fingernails, for example, reminded Bobák of the way that Rocket Bazcjk painted her fingernails. Or were these Orsun's toenails? These were blood splatters on the linoleum floor, Blulip objected.

These were blood splatters surrounding Orsun Ursol, not nail varnish. “I had an accident,” Blulip explained, indicating her mouth. “Prospective *DRS* mascot knocked me in the mouth.” I see, Bobák said. Bobák, can you help? Blulip asked.

Dentures are made from Polymethylmethacrylate (PMMA). PMMA is acrylic Perspex, or Plexiglas. The skeletal formula for acrylic Perspex is

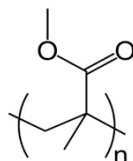


fig. iii

“Aha,” Belahg said, “it says loon.” From top left (l), down and across (oo), to bottom right (n). P.I. Belahg thought it said “loon”. Whereas the FtM/TG army saw the face of an aggressive bird. The FtM/TG army saw the face of battle-axe Healthy-lips. See the tooth (n) under her beak? Bottom right? The tooth (n) under Healthy-lips’s beak made the FtM/TGs tetchy. But the aggressive bird was not Healthy-lips. She was the Acrylic Pecker. She was the Acrylicker. The Acrylicker? The Acrylic Pecker?! No. No. Blulip was not having any of it. The world did not need another bird right now. The world did not need the Acrylicker, and it certainly did not need the Acrylic Pecker. Blulip rejected the Acrylicker alongside PMMA, Perspex, or Plexiglas. Seeing the dermoid-cyst-like denture drying on Bobák’s desk, Blulip had been developing an aversion to Perspex. A Plexiglas allergy. In terms of tooth replacement, Perspex was not an option for Blulip. Blulip was clear on that. Scanning the desk for alternatives, Blulip came across this jollier figure. Who’s this, Blulip asked.

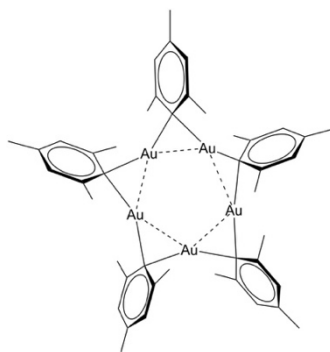


fig. iv

Who was this jollier figure? A butch ballerina performing an arabesque? A femme ballerino performing an arabesque? An arabesque is a pose in ballet in which the dancer “stands on one leg with the other leg extended behind the body” (Wiki). “An arabesque can be executed with the supporting leg *en pointe*, *demi pointe* or with foot flat on the floor” (ibid). Did the femme ballerino execute her arabesque with the supporting leg *en pointe*, or did she just happen to have pointy feet? And wasn’t this also the formula for the chemical element gold? Rocky Bobák, you couldn’t do me a GOLDCROWN?! Blulip preferred the butch ballerina over the Acrylicker any day. But Bobák objected in terms of *fig. iv*. This was not a femme ballerino. Neither was this the skeletal formula for the chemical element gold, in spite of its similar appearance. This was *Colt*, not gold. The fivefold symmetrical sketch on Bobák’s desk represented *Colt*, not gold. “This,” Bobák insisted in respect to the butch ballerina, “is *Colt*.” *Colt* lived in the back. If you wait, I’ll show you. Oh. Ok. Ok, then. Let’s wait.

Blulip felt sabotaged by this *Colt*. *Colt* had replaced gold as a focal point. Because of *Colt*, the narrative had diverted away from the possibility of a gold crown for Blulip. Both, the ballet dancer executing an arabesque and the chemical element

gold had been criminally outperformed by this Colt. It was all about Colt now. Once the last patient had been dealt with, Rocky Bobák withdrew to the *DRS* DIY laboratory where Colt lived. Allowing her a courtesy head start, Belahg, Blulip, the FtM/TG legion, and hundreds of previously inconsequential sharks followed shortly after. Past the NHS self-service check-in kiosk, they followed Bobák into the tiny DIY laboratory out back.

9. COLT

The fivefold symmetrical organism was held in the apparatus under-part uppermost. Hundreds of miniscule tube feet pedalled on empty. The o-shaped mini mouth gasped for oxygen, or attacked space in self-defence. “The sea urchin’s teeth are self-sharpening and can chew through stone” (Wiki). Five minuscule milk fangs are typically arranged inside a circular lip, “with a fleshy tongue-like structure within” (ibid). The animal model, however, in the laboratory spanner had substandard oral health. She retained merely two of five crystalline cuspids. Too much chewing on stone, or not enough. Or else the fluctuating pH levels of South London tap water had affected her dental enamel. “Almost done,” Rocky Bobák said, carefully cleaning the 2mm orifice with a filament implement, a human hair. “Say aah.”

Cute, Blulip said, referring to Bobák.

Global experimental activity around human tooth regeneration had been increasing over the last decade, Bobák explained. The shared objective was the production of modified human gum cells capable of third generation odontogenesis. Humans grow 52 teeth in thrusts of 20 (milk) and 32 (permanent). Then it stops. Finito. The stem-cell-laden layer of tissue in the gum that provides the impetus for tooth growth goes into latency. The Franco/Brazilian team that had

led the contemporary research effort concentrated on alligators and their capacity to grow up to 4thousand new teeth, birth-to-death. Sharks grow up to 24thousand. A hundred sharks on Blulip's *Christopher Ala* T-shirt grew 2.4 million between them. Compared to other prolific tooth-producers, the alligator's dental anatomy most closely resembles the human's. The alligator's dental anatomy is practically humanesque. Alligators, however, make for impractical lab rats. Particularly in central Brixton. Imagine, Bobák said.

Odontogenesis, or tooth development, is a complex and species-specific process from initiation to eruption that depends on gene expression, protein signalling, cell functions, and unknown factors. "Growth and morphogenesis of human teeth," for example, "are regulated by the Sonic Hedgehog protein" (Wiki). Discovered in 1980 in Heidelberg, Black Forest, the Sonic Hedgehog protein is encoded in the Sonic Hedgehog gene whose loss of function causes fruit-fly embryos to grow hedgehog-like spikey projections. Hence the name. Sonic Hedgehog, abbr. SHh. Shh! Say nothing but. Sonic Hedgehog's centrality to human odontogenesis might have affected Rocky Bobák's unorthodox choice of test organism. German for 'sea urchin' is '*Seeigel*' which literally translates as 'sea hedgehog'. Shh. Say nothing but. Bobák's choice of test organism might have been based on a pun.

Since 1991, Rocky Bobák had been experimenting with *eccinoidea* specimens in the DIY lab at the back of the *Dental Repair Shop*. Nice sideline to routine orthodontics. Sea urchins had a fivefold symmetrical structure, look. Structurally gold-like. Look, Blulip. See now? Colt, not gold. Golden biotechnological possibilities, mind. *Eccinoidea* teeth never cease growing. Might sea urchin odontogenesis, fully understood, provide the biochemical tools to transform mainstream prosthodontics? Bobák just put this to Belahg. But the golden days of Bobák's box room lab were over. After

20 years of research activity and numerous controversial contributions to her field, Bobák had pared down her laboratory facilities in 2011. An orthodontically atypical, one-in-a-million specimen remained, at present resisting her routine dental check-up. Her name was Colt, evocative of a young stallion. “Bobák, would you call Colt a formidable micro-stallion?” P.I. Belahg mooted. Personally, Rocky Bobák would not call Colt a formidable micro-stallion, but she supposed that one might. “All done,” the orthodontic maverick said, releasing Colt from the spanner. Bobák dropped her model organism into a conical test flask with a large diameter cylindrical neck. Technically, a fishbowl.

Ok, Bobák said. Let’s start. Watch this. Under the watchful eyes of her guests, Rocky Bobák fed Colt kelp. Rocky Bobák plopped Colt a densely compressed, algae-blue tablet of kelp. Plop. Fizzed in the fishbowl. Blulip stood near the front. Belahg and the FtM/TG peace corps kept in the background. Plop, fizz. Then nothing. The shiver of sharks on Blulip’s *Christopher Ala* T-shirt appeared to hold Colt in check. The shiver of sharks appeared to affect Colt’s appetite. The shiver of sharks on Blulip’s *Christopher Ala* T-shirt frightened the living daylights out of Colt, effectively ruining her appetite. Meanwhile, a shark on Blulip’s back hooked onto Hugo. Hugo’s hook-like cap drove the shark crazy. Hugo and h/ir hook piqued the shark’s appetite. Another shark on Blulip’s back hooked onto Iqbar. Iqbar and h/ir hook drove the shark crazy and piqued its appetite. Under threat of a shark attack, Iqbar and Nigel came alive. They were the liveliest of the FtM/TG lot. Now Iqbar and Nigel appeared to egg Colt on. Go on, Colt. Have a go. Go on! Belahg was with Iqbar and Nigel. Belahg stepped to the front, rooting for Colt. But oh. Oh no. If only Belahg had stayed in the background. Belahg should have stayed in the background.

Because now Colt hooked onto Nigel. Nigel’s hook-like cap drove Colt crazy. Nigel’s hook piqued Colt’s appetite.

Nigel's hook piqued the appetite of a wilder animal. Colt's dental decrepitude turned tiger-like. As a consequence, Colt bit off more than she could chew. Colt bit off a lot more than she could chew. She overextended herself. She buckled like an infatuated micro-stallion.

10. THE GOLDSEXUAL STATUETTE

A GoldSeXUal StatuEtte manoeuvred herself across the workshop wearing a gold crown on one head, and a *Nasir Mazhar* cap with a side pencil holder on the other. Left, the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte's *Nasir-Mazhar*-cap-wearing head instructed the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte's crown-wearing head. Ok, stop. Who was the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte and what was she actioning? The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte incorporated Hilary, Blulip, and the new UU's DNA and AgeNDa, merging several post-binary sexes and projects. Right now, GoldSeXUal's *Nasir-Mazhar*-cap-wearing head kissed the naked light bulb. GoldSeXUal's crown-wearing head was actively turning away from Hilary's groin. Meanwhile, P.I. Belahg recorded GoldSeXUal's excesses on her smartphone. Heh, GoldSeXUal StatuEtte, Belahg called out. Are you a frame-of-reference-stretcher in the sex and gender department? Are you the Gold Standard of radical sexes? Haha, GoldSeXUal laughed. GoldSeXUal did not think that she was the Gold Standard of radical sexes. Belahg filmed her anyway. Heh, GoldSeXual, Belahg reiterated. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte preferred the address 'Sxuse'. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte said that she preferred the address 'Sxuse' at all costs. Sxuse, pronounced 'Zeus'. Or simply Susi. Ok, Belahg said. GoldSeXUal cried that she had to screw something else now. The *Nasir-Mazhar*-cap-wearing head informed the crown-wearing head that GoldSeXUal had some extra screwing to do at the other end of the workshop.

Dangerously, the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte set herself into motion. GoldSeXUal got herself into gear. Belagh leapt onto the workbench and recorded the feat. For movement's sake, GoldSeXUal's crown-wearing head pushed right into Hilary's groin. Hilary's groin was GoldSeXUal's crown-wearing head's natural disposition.

GoldSeXual's crown-wearing head looked like Blulip's, and GoldSeXual's *Nasir-Mazhar*-cap-wearing head looked like Hilary Park's. GoldSeXUal's body or principal mass looked like Hilary Park balancing on the back of the fibreglass Cygnet + Blulip clasping Hilary's legs to support her.

'Scuse! Belahg exclaimed. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte, or Sxuse, ploughed through the new UUs. GoldSeXUal barged into non-participant fibreglass animals.

It was Princess Blulip's fault. Belahg believed that Sxuse's barging into bystanders was Princess Blulip's fault. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte was navigationally unreliable what with her crown-wearing head (Blulip's) buried in Hilary's groin. Heh, Princess Blulip! Belahg called. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte froze. "Don't," Blulip said. "Don't call me 'Princess'." Blulip let go of Hilary's legs and confronted Belahg. "Call me the 'Great Camp King Pin', to quote Brigid Brophy (1969), if you must," Blulip said. If Blulip was not part of the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte, she was the Great Camp King Pin. Not Princess Blulip. See that crown?! It's a camp king thing. It's not a tiara. Ok, Belahg agreed. A camp king thing. Belahg was sorry she had referred to the Great Camp King Pin as 'Princess Blulip'. Satisfied, the Great Camp King Pin resumed her position as the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte's crown-wearing head and navigational motor. Normality returned quickly. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte as a whole did not invest in localised tantrums.

To return to the question, who was the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte and what was she actioning: The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte combined long-term queer activisms (new UU),

queened-up agenderism (Blulip), and no-fucks-giving butchness (Hilary) into a post-binary, extra-individual, socio-biological sex and a transformative gender. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte was pushing the sexual envelope, as well as the boundaries of performance art, criminal investigation, indie TV production, and DIY. Over the course of her goldSeXUal escapades, the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte effected adequate lighting in Blulip's studio/workshop. Already the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte had fixed many finicky light fittings. She was working her goldSeXUal magic at the far end of the workshop right now. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte was fixing light fittings for Britain.

Blulip had hoped that the initiative would qualitatively improve Tulep.tv's materials, which it already had, and not just in terms of image resolution. Just look at the latest video going up. The 3rd *Episode* featured the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte in conversation with an offscreen interrogator (P.I. Belahg). Within half an hour of it going live, Peggy Shaw had left a comment in Tulep.tv's designated section. With Lois Weaver and Deb Margolin, Peggy Shaw (1944-) is a founding member of lesbian/queer performance troupe *Split Britches* (1980-). Peggy Shaw posted this picture in the comments section: *fig. v*. Next, Tammy Whynot Replied To This Post: "In terms of post-binary hybrids, *Split Britches* performed this in '95, 'A Transgender Arabesque' (Shaw, Weaver, Kennerley). See also *fig. v*." Tammy Whynot is a country music singer turned lesbian performance artist, and alter ego of Lois Weaver. This was not about copyright.



Plate 13 The transgender arabesque
Photo: Tom Brazil

PEGGY: (*tybire*) Exterior. Night. Aerial view of the beach. Camera
fig. v

Within an hour of the 3rd *Episode* going live, the doorbell rang in the workshop on Harpur Street. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte opened the door. It was the Transgender Arabesque. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte's *Nasir-Mazhar*-cap-wearing head and her crown-wearing head faced the Transgender Arabesque's permanent wave sporting head. *Vice versa*, the Transgender Arabesque's permanent wave sporting head faced the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte's *Nasir-Mazhar*-cap-wearing head and her crown-wearing head. The Transgender Arabesque wore a gown fit for a princess. A leg dressed in suit trousers and shoes extended from the Transgender Arabesque's gown. See *fig. v*.

An 'arabesque' is one of the basic poses in classical ballet. The term 'arabesque' is an orientalism unfortunately, deriving from the 17th Century French/Italian perception of a pattern elemental to Pre-Islamic and Islamic art. This pattern of

“scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils or thin stems” (Wiki) was thought to capture the sensibility of the ballet pose.

“Nice brogue,” the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte said. Also, “nice gown.” “Ta,” the Transgender Arabesque (aka TA) replied. “Why have you got a GOLD CROWN on?” The Transgender Arabesque questioned GoldSeXUal’s crown rather than GoldSeXUal’s *Nasir Mazhar* cap with the high camp side pencil holder. To keep the Acrylicker at bay, GoldSeXUal’s crown wearing head replied. Ah, the Transgender Arabesque said. To return to the hydra-headed question, who was the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte and what was she actioning? She was Blulip fixating on an improbable gold crown in *lieu* of her Maxillary First Bicuspids, Maxillary First Molar, or Perspex dentures. She was P.I. Belahg pursuing a neglected gold crown lead. She was P.I. Belahg and Blulip running with a throw-away gold crown mention, see ‘8. ROCKY BOBÀK’, pp. 35-36. She was Hilary Park fixing light fittings for Britain, too.

“GoldSeXUal StatuEtte,” the Transgender Arabesque said. “GoldSeXUal StatuEtte, do exploit your photogenicity for Tulep.tv.” The Transgender Arabesque showed her experiencedness in the entertainment industry here. “If you don’t want Tulep.tv to go under, do exploit your photogenicity and personal charisma.” The Transgender Arabesque tried to prevent Tulep.tv’s sinking without a trace. What other capital was there? Monetary? Cracking script? Performance background? No. None of the aforementioned. “Have you explored sex-radical role play, cabaret, or lip-synching satire?” Not yet. Cheap innuendo. Camp comedy. *C’est ça*. Camp comedy?! The Transgender Arabesque shook her Tammy-head. “Not good. Not good at all. Let me help. Let me demonstrate.” The Transgender Arabesque engaged the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte in sex-radical role playing. Oho! OMG. P.I. Belahg could not believe what was happening live on her smartphone screen. P.I. Belahg could not believe what

she was filming. The Transgender Arabesque and the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte engaging in sex-radical role play was better than cheap innuendo. Better than camp comedy. Better than Querbird and Channel 4. This was TV gold. Even P.I. Belahg knew TV gold when she saw it.

'GoldSeXUal StatuEtte meets Transgender Arabesque' was a six minute clip, uploaded in the comment section of the 3rd *Episode*. Within hours, the clip accrued a record number of viewings. Already, its viewing figures exceeded the 1st and 2nd *Episodes*' combined viewing numbers. Lively debate in the comments section too (not about copyright). Eventually, Director-General Tracey B. Lulip promoted the clip to 4th *Episode*. On second thoughts, the 4th *Episode* was not captioned 'GoldSeXUal StatuEtte meets Transgender Arabesque'. Rather, it was captioned 'Transgender Arabesque cruises GoldSeXUal StatuEtte'. But that wasn't it either. Blulip went further. The 4th *Episode* was captioned 'Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver (*Split Britches*) cruise Hilary Park (PET CYCLE)'. Blulip was a quick learner. Something about discoverability. About Googleability.

II. PRINCESS DIANA MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

Googling variations on 'princess', 'princess misidentify', and 'mistake identity princess', P.I. Belahg came across the report 'Tourist Joins Search Party for Herself in Hyde Park'. It had circulated on the typical social networking sites in April 2015 and again in July 2017.

A coach draws up at the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain in Hyde Park. International tourists get off the bus and freshen up in the rest rooms. A tourist decides to update her outfit. She changes from her *Christopher Ala* Black Polar Bears T-shirt into a *C&A Concentric Circles* T-shirt. When

the tourist gets back on the bus, her fellow travellers fail to recognise her *sans* Black Polar Bears T-shirt. Word spreads that someone is missing. The tourist fails to recognise the missing-person's description as a description of herself. The description does not include the *Christopher Ala* Black Polar Bears T-shirt. A major search operation around Hyde Park is mobilised, including dogs and a helicopter. Police divers search the Serpentine and the Memorial Fountain itself. The tourist in question is amongst those most invested in the search. She emerges as an operational driving force. 14 hours into the operation, one of the tour operators counts the passengers on a hunch. The tour operator confirms the group's completeness. The search is called off with immediate effect.

Reading, P.I. Belahg identified with the subject of the report immediately. P.I. Belahg *was* the tourist in the *Christopher Ala* Black Polar Bears T-shirt and the *C&A* Concentric Circles T-shirt. Like the deplorable tourist, P.I. Belahg had not realised that she had been the subject of her own investigation. Like the international tourist, P.I. Belahg had been unaware that she had been the subject of her own search. Now, P.I. Belahg realised who Belá Gotterbarm was. Who *she* was. P.I. Belahg *was* Belá Gotterbarm. And Belá Gotterbarm was P.I. Belahg. With a new sense of entitlement, Belahg got up and walked into the bedroom. She crossed P.I. Loveday's pink cordon and picked up a discarded sweater. She replaced the RAF DEMONS question-marks jumper she had been wearing with the soft-cotton Pegasus print sweater. It fitted to a t.

P.I. Belahg sat down on the hound's-tooth Formica table that stood by the window. The Pegasus on Belahg's sweater reared and raised her wings. Pink flashes and green graffiti manifested Pegasus energy. Pegasus energy, perhaps, powered P.I. Belahg's thought process. A thought process that connected Tulep to Colt.

1) A formidable micro-horse had sprung across the Formica tabletop. Tulep had postured atop the Formica tabletop like a feminine mini-stallion.

2) A colt is a young stallion, a male foal. Colt had buckled like a formidable female stallion.

3) Healthy-lips signified TOOTH in capital letters. Tulep's proxy Healthy-lips signified TOOTH, which might or might not indicate the Isle of Dogs, or the Canaries.

4) Colt had a nice set of ivories.

Hound's-tooth doggedness, perhaps, drove Belahg's detective work, producing the hypothesis that Tulep and Colt were identical. Colt was Tulep. And Tulep was Colt.

On second thought, did Colt have hooves? Pinions? P.I. Belahg could not remember. Verifying this latest hypothesis would go beyond testing the fit of a sweatshirt. Verifying Colt's identity would require a face-to-face confrontation and a recce to Rocky Bobak's *DRS* laboratory. A Top Secret Moonlight Op was on the agenda. A midnight recce, and a night out. Blulip! Belahg cried. What are you doing later?

12. MÖRDERVERGEL

P.I. Belahg was wearing her *Comme Des Garçons* shirt with Mexican-inspired pompom detailing fringing the button tab and the chest pocket. Bottle-green/turquoise chequered poplin. 100% polyester pompoms. Belahg was wearing her shirt with her *Y-3 Hero* joggers. On the other hand, Blulip was wearing her *Christopher Ala* white/orange shark-print T-shirt and her camouflage patterned joggers from *Tesco*. She wore her joggers pulled up over her ankles, exposing a pair of gold-threaded socks. A person on the 59 bus complimented them on their Gilbert & George-like sensibility. People were so educated in Socialist Britain, it was great. At 11 pm, P.I. Belahg and Blulip got off at Brixton Hill, Streatham end.

They broke into Rocky Bobák's laboratory. It was easy. The backdoor was inadequately secured. When it came to it, Blulip preferred to wait by the door. You don't mind, Belahg, do you? Blulip preferred to wait by the energy-saver emergency lamp near the entrance, rather than enter the barely-lit lab. You go in, Blulip said. Go on. In you go. P.I. Belahg went in.

Suspended ahead was a cone of golden sap. At head-level ahead, a liquid lampion expended a golden lustre. On the shelf ahead, a conical laboratory flask held many fluid ounces. An *Erlenmeyer* flask fluke-reflected Blulip's fairly fairy-friendly, gold-threaded socks. Exploiting the fluke for the purpose of her investigation, P.I. Belahg navigated her partner to spotlight the fishbowl. Blulip, step to the left! Left! No, left!? Despite her efforts, Belahg's research object continued to fluctuate between one too many realities. Blulip! Left is where your thumb is on your right! Blulip said to use the smartphone as a torch. Why not use the torch app on your phone? Ah. O-keh, Belahg said. Make a video, too. Quick! Belahg got her phone out. Blulip? Hm? "How can you tell whether a sea urchin is dead?" Belahg zoomed in on the fishbowl's content. "Flip her over. If you look right in the middle, you will see five little shapes that look like teeth. If they move, she's alive." [*Yahoo! Answers*, accessed 2nd Sept, 2019] Disregarding her *Comme des Garçons* shirt, Belahg slipped her free hand through the cylindrical neck and into the test flask. She flipped Colt over and investigated. Tulep? Is that you?

A fan came on in the corner. What sounded like a fan catching its casing came on in the corner. Blulip wanted to go. Belahg, let's go. "Wait," Belahg said, recording the fishbowl's content. "I lost a pompom in there." A Mexican-style pompom was floating inside the flask. A turquoise polyester boat drifting upon the flotsam and jetsam. Are you joking. Belahg, are you joking? Blulip panicked. The fan stopped. A terrible flapping ensued in the corner, like a large bird's wings pounding their concrete confinement. *K-RACH K-RAACH*.

What's that?! Blulip and Belahg abandoned their midnight recce and legged it.

Terminating her flight, Tulep settled next to the fishbowl. The pompom inside was a gift after Tulep's own heart. Her owner Gotterbarm had left a pompom for her. In the absence of animal care, a pompom from Gotterbarm came a close second. Since Tulep's return from the Isle of Superdykes, Gotterbarm had barely spoken to her. For several weeks now, her owner had seemed somewhat dissociated. Gotterbarm no longer knew her own name, never mind Tulep's. Tulep orbited her *Faszinationsobjekt* like a formidable mini-filly. She pranced against the fishbowl like a young colt. With the resolve of a feminine stallion, she finally went for it. Tulep succeeded in overturning the fishbowl. The result wasn't pretty, but the pompom was. It swam in a pool on the laboratory floor. Tulep grasped the pompom with her mouth where it would remain until further notice. Surely, this level of décor would attract her owner's attention. This level of bling. Tulep exited through the box room lab's window, and went after Gotterbarm. Dogging her feckless owner had become a mode of existence for Tulep.

13. ICY PET

The pink, brown and coffee-cream peony pattern was based on an Art Deco tessellation design. Various shaped straight-edged pink petals clustered around coffee-cream reproductive centres into four variations of a peony flower. Various shaped straight-edged coffee-cream petals clustered around pink reproductive centres into four spectrally inverted variations of a peony flower. The pink/coffee-cream and coffee-cream/pink peonies were arranged and replicated across the polyester carpet in such a way that the brown interspaces between individual peonies added up to a straight-edged multi-lizard-shaped labyrinth, sinkhole or sewer. In addition to that, the

coffee-cream elements added up to a quasi-SOS in 2D, a Morse code distress signal smeared across polyester.


The carpet had always covered the waiting room floor and was integral to the ethos and the aesthetics of *Dental Repair Shop Rocky Bobák*. It shaped its collective imaginary. It also needed replacing. It had needed replacing since circa 1975. The window however in which to replace it had closed. In 1976 the carpet had been included in the English Heritage Statutory List of Structures of Special Interest on grounds of not the Art Deco *pièce unique*, but the material depicting it. Pivotaly positioned within the history of industrial innovations, Bobák's floor-covering was not your average Axminster but a rare polyester prototype produced in 1939. Polyester had not been officially invented until 1941, when PolyEthylene Terephthalate (PET) had been patented in Britain. PET had formed the basis of *Terylene*[®], the first synthetic fibre to be commercially manufactured by Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI). PET, ICI. Icy pet. But not yet. The prototypical exemplar of PET had been put forward by a West-Indian chemical laboratory in 1939. A Western rival laboratory however had persuaded the scientific community that the West-Indian innovation was carcinogenic. Derivative of a previous failure, failure for all sorts of reasons. The rival had ended up patenting their identical version of PET, but not until 1941, two years later. Delaying Icy Pet. They delay/I delay Icy Pet. Has it been said that the pink/brown and coffee-cream Art Deco tessellation pattern in proto-polyester produced yet another figure in *Vogelperspektive*? A larger figure. Dadaist, even. The *König der Vögel*, a large-bodied turkeyheader, reared her head over so many pink-brown-and-coffee-cream peonies that crowded like individual organs around and within her. Carrying the air and skin-tone of a turkey in the freezer compartment, the original Icy Pet held her head up and raised her arms in defiance. This was *der König der Vögel*, the Icy

Pet, or her of the priceless pink-brown-and-coffee-cream polyester polyphony. Whatever next.


Peopling the infamous rug was Bobák in glad rags. This was Bobák in drag. Bobák was wearing her Rocket Bazcjk *alter ego*. She was getting in touch with her feminine side. Her ensemble comprised a traditional Black Forest dress under a punky T-shirt, a pair of knee-length, multi-coloured socks depicting butterflies, flowers and genitalia-shaped insects and worms, black hairclips in her blond boy's haircut, and burgundy lipstick on her mouth and forehead. On the alternative scene, she had won prizes. A John-Waters-inspired double drag introvert, Rocket Bazcjk was mending gum-coloured plastic palates at her desk in the shop window. Highly functioning, she routinely performed technical labour while evaluating the day's *nouveaurthodontic* procedures, or formulating those of tomorrow. Tonight however was special. Rocket Bazcjk was wearing her Helper Cell T-shirt on top of her traditional dress. The T-shirt had been in a moth bag for over a decade. It owed its current airing to Rocket-knew-not-what, the multi-lizard-shaped shit channel underfoot, the blatant coffee-cream S.O.S., the original Icy Pet's pushing a defiant agenda. The fact that she had seen someone on Coldharbour Lane yesterday wearing hers. As it were, the John-Waters-and-polyester-affinitive double-dragger wearing an original Helper Cell T-shirt constituted a manifestation of a larger-scale, slow-starter, multi-tiered insurrection of helpers yet to come. Rocket Bazcjk, for one, was never more fearsome, never more uncompromising than in feminine clothing.

Around midnight, Belahg and Blulip knocked against the shop window. A 'helper' sat at her work desk, repairing dental prostheses. Hello Bazcjk, Belahg, Blulip, hello hello. How nice to, nice T-shirt. Come on in. "You might want to sit down, Rocket," Blulip said as they entered the waiting room. Belahg and Blulip were here officially to inform Rocket Bazcjk (Butt-Cheek) of the discovery they had made in Rocky Bobák's box

room lab. My laboratory? Do break in through the backdoor, why don't you. Sorry, Belahg said. Then Blulip reported that Bobák's model specimen, experimental indispensable and long-term companion animal Colt was dead. Belahg and Blulip had found her extinct in her fishbowl. The pink, brown and coffee-cream peony variations on Rocket's polyester appeared positively lively, Blulip explained, compared to the way that the animal had presented when Belahg had close-examined her less than an hour ago. In terms of tooth movement, Colt's mini-mouth had stood agape post-last-gasp. A hundred sharks had been present to no effect. A hundred *Christopher Ala* sharks on white cotton had had no animating effect. Colt was dead. Our condolences, Blulip concluded. We truly are sorry. Oh dear. Oh oh. Was there anything else?! Peony peony, lizardine shite. Pink-brown polyester reality, stay *unterschwellig*, stay out of it. But merciless Icy Pet showed her coffee-creamed features and body in polyester, commencing her intervention. Icy Pet's hands appeared larger than average, her digits swollen. Yes, Blulip said. Now that you mention it, there was something else. Belahg and Blulip were in a position to confirm that something or someone else had been in the laboratory who might be connected to the event. Something or someone had interfered with their forensic inventory, had in fact precipitated their inventory's abortion. A faceless threat had beaten her flight feathers in a corner under the ceiling. Flight feathers? What else. Peony, peony, lizardine interference. Pink, brown and coffee-cream poly-reality... Yes, flight feathers. Like Max Ernst's Loplop, or, come to think of it, the very coffee-cream Icy Pet there, the faceless flapper had had multiple tentacles terminating in hands with balloony digits. Newfangled strangle instruments, Blulip intimated. Killing machines. Also flight-enabling, dual functional. What?! Murder flutterer, *Mördervogel*. She probably done it. Bazcjk

frowned. *Mördervogel*? In the *DRS* laboratory?! Balloony, baloney, Bazcjk figured. “Belahg, get your phone out,” Blulip requested. They crowded around the smartphone’s screen. The footage depicted post-mortem Colt. However, the soundtrack substantiated Blulip and Belahg’s allegations to an extent. A rapid staccato, low frequency range, was distorting the smartphone’s speaker. Oh, wow. I see. Rocket Bazcjk admitted that the death would have to be treated as suspicious. P.I. Belahg! Find her. Bring me the *Mördervogel*, Bazcjk cried. Ok, P.I. Belahg said. Let’s start by calling Hilary. P.I. Belahg suggested they call Hilary Park. Who do you call in the event of a pet casualty? A death in the extended family? Hilary Park from , of course. For starters, Hilary would PetCycle Colt. Hilary would investigate whether Icy Pet, Loplop, or *Mördervogel* were still in the vicinity. Hilary would support bereft Rocket Bazcjk. *Hilfe*, Hilary. Hilary, help. That instant, they heard a crash that originated in Bobák/Bazcjk’s laboratory in the back of the practice. Bazcjk picked up the phone all the more swiftly.

Half an hour later, Hilary arrived wearing her own Helper Cell T-shirt. Hilaire!! Hi. How can I help? Please take a seat in the waiting room. The longer Blulip’s account continued, the clearer it became that it was affecting Hilary in unexpected ways. It was jinxing Hilary’s usual swagger. It was interfering with her butch bravado. “Let me explain,” Hilary said once Blulip had finished. Allegedly, a *Mördervogel*-like micro-Ewe had contaminated Contamino Park. Hilary Park corroborated Blulip’s report, stating that, inexplicably, a feral *Vogel* had been *vor Ort*, contaminating the Contamino Park exhibition.

Days ago,  HO, Holborn. What you mean, ‘*Mördervogel*-like micro-Ewe’. I know, I know. Hilary understood the unlikelihood of a *Mördervogel*-like micro-Ewe contaminating Contamino Park. She was the first to admit its improbability. That’s why Hilary had kept her *Mördervogel* visitation to

herself. That's why Hilary had not even told Rocket Bazcjk. She had thought she had imagined things. She had thought she had lost it. Gone soft in the head. Now, Hilary thought about Tracey B. Lulip, P.I. Belahg, Rocket Bazcjk, Icy Pet and the peony world they had in common. The pink-brown-and-coffee-cream polyester reality she had entered when entering the waiting room rendered multiple tentacles, balloony *Griffel, et cetera*, incredibly credible, promoting the plausibility of a *Mördervogel* going round London. As far as Hilary was concerned, the pink-brown-and-coffee-cream poly-reality she shared with Tracey B. Lulip, P.I. Belahg, Rocket Bazcjk, and Icy Pet credibly furnished her own chimera with multiple tentacles, balloony *Griffel*, the whole shebang, and rendered the scenario of a serial *Mördervogel* going round London far more realistic than a psychotic hallucination affecting her personal faculties. By the first light of dawn, Hilary Park and Rocket Bazcjk entered the box room laboratory together. Prepared for the worst, they found the animal model's remains in a pool on the floor. No trace of *Mv*.

14. THE AQUA-BLEUPENULTIMATE MODEL

Shoulder-to-shoulder budgerigar statuettes extended along the workbench like a biological development study. All models were variations on a prototype, an ovate torso supporting a globular head. Levels of intricacy varied, height, also colour. At 46 centimetres one of the larger specimens, the penultimate statuette in the series was painted in aqua-blue top-to-toe. She had no refined features bar a facial mark that hung from the mouth tongue-like and purple. A recent addition, the penultimate statuette represented P.I. Belahg's attempt towards an updated model of Tulep. "She doesn't look right in the head," Belahg figured, meaning 'her head doesn't look right'. Why? Why didn't the penultimate statuette look right in

the head? A prototypical oviate body supported a prototypical globular head. So far so good. Beyond that, the aqua-*bleu* figurine was a representational flop. Far too literally did she incorporate recent evidence into a better model of Tulep. Her head was an *echinoidea*-inspired, spines-less endoskeleton, otherwise known as the 'hard test' of an urchin. P.I. Belahg had carved intricate ambulacral grooves and tubercles into the test, producing a varicose-veined, goose-bumped and featureless head. Matters had further deteriorated with the addition of the purple tongue. Ultimately, the penultimate statuette had failed the most basic test. The initial screen test. The camera had not loved her. Belahg loved her. But the camera had not. As a consequence, Director-General Blulip had a problem with her. Belahg had a problem child on her hands.

Let's call the problem child 'Beau'. P.I. Belahg biroed a pedantic zigzag across Beau, producing a bedhead effect rather than *echinoidesque* spines, say, or budgerigarian plume. Better, Blulip? Can Beau go on TV? No way. *Die kommt mir nicht ins Fernsehen*. P.I. Belahg put Beau back on the shelf, sandwiching her between the antepenultimate and ultimate budgerigar models. Maintaining her position as the ultimate model in the series, Healthy-lips remained the one to be beaten. Healthy-lips might have looked a bit dated a minute ago. But for now, Healthy-lips would remain Belahg's primary investigative lead. Female lead, Blulip added. Sure, Belahg said. Good night. P.I. Belahg went to bed early. Blulip stayed up working late.

15. PAINLEVÉ HYPERCAMP AND AXOIOTTL

A supermoon pink-flooded the workshop on Harpur Street and all things therein. An ebay-bought second-hand digicam and an ex-professional 1960s camera dolly had appeared in the workshop. Belahg was sleeping on the floor alongside the

kitchenette. Blulip had a go at editing their recent footage; at making it work for Tulep.tv. A neo-scientific drama failed to unfold on the laptop screen, a poetic experiment perhaps, with a camp ethos, conducted under a rarer, queerer star, but not the future blockbuster Blulip had hoped for. The pressure to follow their breakthrough 4th *Episode*, ‘Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver (*Split Britches*) cruise Hilary Park (PET CYCLE)’ affected Blulip’s approach to the 5th *Episode*. So did the Transgender Arabesque’s premonition of Tulep.tv’s going under. These pressures cost Blulip her natural bravado.

A knock on the door. It was Belagh’s rival, P.I. Loveday from Holborn Detectives PLC. P.I. Loveday was paying Blulip an unwelcome late night visit. Hi. May I come in? P.I. Loveday asked. Not really, Blulip replied. Blulip said she was editing Tulep.tv’s 5th *Episode*. Ah! Let’s have a look. P.I. Loveday let herself in. She pulled over a chair and sat down next to Blulip.

What on earth, P.I. Loveday said.

A close up of an aquarium animal, sure, but where was the action in that? Jacques Cousteau’s *Night of the Squid* sprang to mind as a superior example of the genre, or perhaps Jean Painlevé’s *Les Assassins d’Eau Douce* (1949), *Freshwater Assassins*. With Genevieve Hamon, *haute-bourgeois* avant-gardener Jean Painlevé had been pioneering ‘surrealist science-films’ such as *Les Assassins d’Eau Douce* (ibid), *Les Danseuses de la Mer* (1956), and, significantly, the anticipatory betterment of Blulip’s 5th *Episode*, *Les Oursins* (1954), Engl. *Sea Urchins*. Watching a Youtube version, Loveday felt that *Les Oursins* handsdown outperformed Blulip’s 5th *Episode*, if not in terms of poetics, in terms of action and drama. Further, P.I. Loveday contended, *Les Oursins* had been shot in ’54, 64 years before the 5th *Episode*. Loveday wanted to know what this, the 5th *Episode*, added to the existing attempt. How was it new? A minute and a half into the video for example,

Painlevé and Hamon's animal star was seen agitating the ocean-floor by way of bodily micro-movements or corporal wiggling. Look. The capture informed Loveday and Blulip that *l'oursin* was digesting: "*L'intestine est donc bourre de sable et en digere les particules nutritives.*" Compare that, Painlevé and Hamon's self-sufficient, sand-churning, submarine mini-hydrofoil, to Blulip's inanimate Colt. Following the close-up of *l'oursin* absorbing *la nutrition*, the French film cut to a scientist's hand live-dissecting the self-burying hydrofoil with a small pair of scissors. The scientist opened her up along the length of her abdomen so as to showcase for the camera *son intestine*, now indigesting. In the right hand column of the screen, Youtube recommended a clip, *How to Eat Sea Urchin, Pt.1*. Unlike the 5th Episode, P.I. Loveday continued, *Les Oursins* had advanced 'neo-zoological drama' in significant ways. *Neo-zoological Drama* had been a concept developed by Jean Painlevé in the pseudoscientific, hoax text of the same name, which he had submitted to *l'Académie des Sciences* in '29. Given these high calibre precedents, Loveday insisted, it was not a moment too soon that Blulip stopped and reflected and asked herself what constituted drama today. What constitutes drama today? Loveday insinuated that the future of Tulep.tv depended on these and similar questions. "Audiences love drama," Loveday declared. As well as *Les Oursins*, the French *haute-bourgeois* dramaturges had produced *Cristaux Liquides* (1978), and a film showing a male sea horse in labour pain, *L'Hippocampe* (1934). *L'Hippocampe*, Hypercamp. Painlevé Hypercamp just popped into existence. Shadow of her future self at this stage, Painlevé Hypercamp would become Blulip's future drag alter ego. Blulip did not tell P.I. Loveday about Painlevé Hypercamp. For now, Blulip kept Hypercamp to herself. Blulip put Hypercamp on the backburner.

P.I. Loveday, meanwhile, was on a roll, debating the future of drama in terms of its past. Come to think of it. Loveday

came to think of it. What had been the public reception of *Cristaux Liquides* (1978), or *L'Hippocampe* (1934)? Marginal, albeit fanatic. The films had incited isolated instances of fanaticism, but had not attained widespread popularity. Here's another example, Loveday said. Forget the French. Neo-scientific drama was taken to the next level by Austrian nationals, of all people.

Like the better-known Jacques Cousteau, Austrian *Unterwasserfotograf*, *Tauchpionier*, *Meeresbiologe*, and *Patriarch* Hans Hass (1919-2013) had extended Painlevé and Hamon's early concept of neo-zoological drama, producing neo-scientific blockbusters. *MENSCHEN UNTER HAIEN* (1947, 84 Min.), for example. *MENSCHEN UNTER HAIEN* featured an early-development underwater breathing apparatus that in one instance had caused Hass's onscreen oxygen intoxication. The crucial transformation from documentary into feature film, *Kassenschlager, mit Millionenpublikum*, had been attributed to Lotte Hass, Loveday said. Secretary, underwater photographer, underwater glamour model and actor, Lotte had outperformed Hans's sharks on a regular basis. "*Sie stahl jedem Hai die Show.*" Née Baierl, the media were quick to rename her Lotte *Haierl*. Lotte Little-Shark. Charisma, performance and showmanship had transformed underwater poetics into box office hits, and that was the sort of drama Blulip should develop Tulep.tv according to. The idea of a human actor-amongst. Give the audience a way in. The presence of a shark lady, for example, wouldn't hurt to mitigate the fundamental alienness of a baby-seal killing predator. Go further. Anthropomorphise the monster. Make the shark Mr. Shark [sic]! Make it relevant for the viewer. Do the work for him [sic]. Meanwhile, proliferating aquatic scenarios conjured another one still. Blulip half-remembered an Argentinian/French 1950s narration, *Axolotl*, that featured the eponymous Mexican walking fish. The axolotl's utmost

otherness was the precise quality that the narration's narrator recognised and connected with, despite the absence of Lotte Hass or any other interspecies intermediary. Anthropogenic! P.I. Loveday exclaimed, disrupting Blulip's reverie. More importantly: Photogenic! "If in doubt, provide EYE CANDY," Loveday advised. "I leave it with you." And with these words, P.I. Loveday left.

Left alone, Blulip contemplated *Loveday's brief*. The pink supermoon, perhaps, and Blulip's pressure to repeat her recent success had rendered her strangely susceptible to Loveday's influence. *Loveday's brief*. Loveday being a rogue agent that Blulip herself (regretted she) had (ever) recruited.

Blulip began manufacturing a version of a bikini from the previously inconsequential theatre backcloth depicting 'Day'. Blulip sewed a daylight delight, a nifty bikini. There was no women's underwear in Blulip and Belahg's shared household that could be adapted. Not really, only already appropriated men's pants and *Bjorn Borg*TM hybrids for agender feminists. However, *Loveday's brief*, Blulip's agenda w/r/t Tulep.tv, overlapping subaqueous scenarios, Genevieve Hamon, Painlevé Hypercamp, Lotte Hass, and French/Argentinian *Axolotl* coalesced to engender a figure that required a nifty kit, a bikini outfit. Introducing: AxoLottl, the character, the audience attractor, the aberration. The eye-catching bikini-wearer, EYE CANDY, and Tulep.tv's next star and agitator. In the small hours, Blulip fabricated AxoLottl's bikini. Finally, it was done.

"Belahg, put some clothes on," Blulip said. "Put these clothes on."

Still half asleep, Belahg rose. She was wearing a large soft-cotton T-shirt and large men's underpants. Blulip strapped the new digital camera to the professional 1960s tripod dolly. Then she addressed and primed Belahg, calling out: "AxoLottl!" Blulip handed 'AxoLottl' the bikini bottoms she had sewn. AxoLottl put on the bikini bottoms over, repeat: OVER, her

existing men's underpants. Next, Blulip handed AxoLottl the bikini top she had sewn. AxoLottl put on the bikini top over, rpt: OVER, her oversize T-shirt. "Supra," Blulip said. Next, Blulip produced a cubit-long, aqua-*bleu* budgerigar figurine. The cubit-long, aqua-*bleu* budgerigar figurine was THEE inhuman(e) object, THEE *objet de* concern, that AxoLottl was to render palatable, attractive and relevant to an otherwise indifferent audience. Blulip's budgerigar figurine was Hans Hass's shark, Jean Painlevé's *Oursin*, and representative of anything that was likely to feature heavily in Tulep.tv's subsequent programming. Anthropomorphise the monster, Blulip recalled *Loveday's brief*. Anthropomorphise the cubit-long, inhuman(e) *objet de*, by sheer anthropo-proximity. Using gaffer tape, Blulip proceeded to strap *l'objet de* concern, the aqua-*bleu* budgerigar figurine, vertically to AxoLottl's right thigh. Producing anthropo-proximity, Blulip strapped *l'objet de* concern lengthwise to AxoLottl's right thigh. Then Blulip retreated. Operation 'AxoLottl, Anthropomorphise the Object' was operative. It was all systems go. The digi-cam was recording. From here on, AxoLottl was meant to extemporise. The idea was for her to enact a mutual connection between *l'objet* and the AxoLottl character, so as to transform *l'objet*, AxoLottl, the lot, into something with a lot of public appeal. The strategy backfired. For starters, AxoLottl was not as at ease in her bikini as Lotte Hass had been. Supra or not, AxoLottl was not. AxoLottl blew her top the moment she became half-aware of what she was wearing. She went ballistic. Not for nothing had she, Belahg, b.1974, spent 1975-201x rejecting the *hundsnormale*, bog-standard femininity epitomised in the item of clothing she found herself wearing. Not for nothing had she, Belahg, spent 1975 to today rejecting the *hundsnormale*, bog-standard, bikini-sporting, frock-donning femininity enforced by an autobiographical mother, an autobiographical grandmother, an autobiographical father, an autobiographical grandfather, an autobiographical

paediatrician, autobiographical teachers, autobiographical classmates, autobiographical shop assistants, autobiographical toilet attendants, and an autobiographical public, in order of vehemence. At significant personal cost, Belahg had not gone near a bikini in living memory. There existed photographs of a ten-year-old in a variety of ill-fitting suits and incongruous cravats. A series of abortive hair-do and hair-dye experiments, 1981-1990, were archived photographically, epitomising the coming-of-age related crisis experienced by specifically the genderqueer teenager. Do not say that EVERY teenage is critical. Look at the photos. Ebony Black. Night Blue Black. Black Violet Black. Blackest Black. And, godhelpus, Auburn. Blond highlights in Ebony Black, starched-collar white shirt, black skinny necktie, and black pleated trousers describes one of the more coherent attempts at a look, a ten-year-old's DIY wildgirl interpretation of Simon Le Bon. In 1984, any wildgirl incarnation of Simon Le Bon would have been enough... to... In 1984, Simone Le Bon had caused consternation in the Black Forest. Subsequently, the eleven, twelve, thirteen-year-old had failed to grow out of it. It had gone on for too long. They had conspired to fuck *die Faxen* out of the child. They had conspired to have somebody fuck *die Faxen* out of the child. By tacit agreement, the *Schwäbische* gender police had seen to the dyke child being taught many life lessons. Lest she become a bulldagger. Lest she become a fully-fledged, raving, raging, reckoning and incorrigible adult powerdagger. Strong and unhinged. What if she organised. Already there had been *Techtelmechtel* with that wildgirl interpretation of John Taylor. Girl-on-girl hanky-panky. Innocent, but. Best nipped in the bud.

Reliving her childhood, AxoLottl was having a meltdown. The bikini had triggered a critical flashback. Anxious to remove her contraptions, AxoLottl was yanking the budgerigar figurine strapped to her thigh. Blulip did a double take. A tiny pink LED signalled that the digicam was

recording. AxoLottl was struggling with extrastrong gaffer tape, crying *schlosshund*like. Oh dear, Blulip thought. Experiment 'AxoLottl! Anthropomorphise *l'objet!*' was spiralling out of control. The scene's unexpectedly risqué and arguably not unattractive quality was being undermined by the high levels of personal distress on display. Experiment AxoLottl was, if not failing, derailing. AxoLottl was alienating future audiences the way she was having a meltdown. Not a minute too soon did Blulip realise that only one person could save the day and that was Painlevé Hypercamp. Personification of a post-adolescent context shaped by decades on the queer scene, Painlevé Hypercamp was to restore the perspective of a seasoned gayer. Rather than *Maman* or *Papa* Belahg, Painlevé Hypercamp was to provide the context in which a bikini on a butch meant feminist camp rather than normative femininity. In short, Painlevé Hypercamp was to re-establish the abnormality that they normally inhabited and that temporarily seemed to have disappeared in an autobiographical time-warp. Pressed to save the day *subito*, Painlevé Hypercamp, when it came to it, was just Blulip with her top off, engaging in hypocamp micromovement. Hypocamp micromovement was a strangely microfied, butoh-like and restrained full-body expression of gay exuberance. In this way, Painlevé Hypercamp microadvanced towards AxoLottl, wildgirl John-Taylor-like. Promptly, AxoLottl ceased having a psychotrip. AxoLottl returned from her psychojourney *prontamente*. Painlevé Hypercamp and AxoLottl proceeded to hypocamp in a most consolatory fashion. They made moves to remove Axo's contraption, the aqua-bleu *objet de* concern and bone of contention. The digicam was recording. Eventually, gaffer gave way. When it came to it, AxoLottl prevented Painlevé Hypercamp from removing her suprabikini. AxoLottl said that the rescue operation had been accomplished, and that no further actions would be required. Thank you, Painlevé, Painlevé, Painlevé.

Relaxing into her character and her suprabikini, AxoLottl microdanced with Painlevé Hypercamp into a low-battery indicator LED sunset.


Eventually the camera turned itself off. The doorbell went. Belahg and Blulip disbanded. Blulip opened the door. It was the great Belua. Belua entered the workshop. She hesitated, looking questioningly from Blulip to Belahg. "Is this a bad time?" Belua asked. "To the contrary," Blulip responded.

16. BELUA


Belua was a broad-shouldered quadruped with a disproportionately small, pastel-blue head. Belua was a large and rectangular quadruped with one pronounced collarbone. Belua could barely fit through the door. She made her entrance lengthwise, left shoulder first. Who are you? Belahg asked, projecting her question upwards and towards Belua's small head. The head was pastel-blue and budgerigar-shaped. The head perched on a hypertrophied, pink-brown-and-coffee-cream coloured collarbone. Belua was a composite character consisting of two human characters, the rolled up carpet they carried, and an errant bird perching on it. The carpet roll that the humans were shouldering instantiated the pink-brown-and-coffee-cream coloured clavicle of a brand-new beastie. Hello, Belua. Whilst waiting to hear from the head, Belahg changed from her suprabikini into something more decent. Belahg swapped her bikini for her Y-3 *Hero* joggers. She put her *adidas* trainers on. Who are you, and, in respect to recent debauchery, what are you? *Sittenpolizei? Sittichpolizei?* The vice squad? A turquoise tumour hung from Belua's head's, what, lower eyelid. A bright turquoise tumour emblazoned the head's eyelid. Some form of Abrikossofs. Or a stye? As per response, Belua's head detached from her broad-shouldered body and volplaned onto the workbench. The head ran past a


row of turpentine bottles and hid behind a pot of paint. Belua apologised for the late night visitation. Headless, she spoke from the heart. Then Belua proceeded to disintegrate. Her shoulder duplex disengaged from her pink-brown-and-coffee-cream-coloured clavicle. The latter landed on the workshop's linoleum floor. Finally, Belua's broad torso bifurcated, and Belua was gone. *Sapperlot!* Hilary, Bobák, it's you, it's you! Hilary Park and Rocky Bobák were wearing their Helper Cell T-shirts. They had thick streaks of glitter down their cheeks like some kind of war paint. They had come to the workshop with an agenda.

They were to Combat A Localised Evil. They were to Combat A Localised Evil, who was wreaking havoc in SW2 and WC1X. They were to bring down the *Mördervogel*. They were to repurpose existing microinfrastructures such as Tulep.tv to support the manhunt for the Mv. Extending a tradition of radical media activism (think *Born in Flames*, think *ACT UP* media strategies), they were to repurpose existing microinfrastructures and issue a public appeal. They were to issue an explicit appeal, *einen Fahndungsaufruf*, on Tulep.tv.

Hilary Park explained how Rocky Bobák had come earlier to  HO on the Gray's Inn Road. Initially, Park and Bobák had intended to broadcast a video-version of a mugshot, a moving wanted-poster, so to speak. They had intended to televise a digitally animated reconstruction of the fugitive *Mördervogel*. Do you recognise this, or one similar? Do you recognise anything on the basis of this? Would anyone who knows anything please come forward? In order to create an identikit composite of the missing subject, Park and Bobák had employed SketchCop-FACETTE, FACES 2000, and the latest EvoFit or EFIT-V softwares, whose algorithms are based on evolutionary mechanisms. Tagline: "Click, capture, convict." Park and Bobák had spent the afternoon on

SketchCop-FACETTE. Ultimately, it had transpired that the Mv's facette was not capturable. The Mv's facette was not reconstructable via the regular technologies. SketchCop-FACETTE algorithms had failed to generate a likely facial composition. By their own admission, Park and Bobák had failed to input reliable data. They had failed to select – 'click' – appropriate facial components. SketchCop-FACETTE's database of facial components had offered nothing that had approximated the *Mördervogel's* redeye, for example... "Red?!" Bobák had cried, "purple!" ...nor the *Mördervogel's* typical pinklip. "What pink lips you have, birdie," Hilary had quipped. After hours of compiling e-collage *Fratzen*, Hilary Park and Rocky Bobák had concluded that SketchCop-FACETTE was not going to be the technology that would bring the Great British public their *Mördervogel*. Nor was it going to jog their own memory, sketchy at best. Was *Mördervogel* inch-high and bloated? Balloony, baloney, or Loplop-like? Blue-faced or green-headed? The reconstruction of the *Mördervogel* called for another strategy. A strategy B.

This afternoon at  HO, Park and Bobák had asked themselves where else to begin. Where else to begin? Where better to begin than before the beginning. Hilary Park and Rocky Bobák had decided to conduct a more thorough reconstruction of the capacity they knew as the *Mördervogel*. For starters, the *Mördervogel* was a progeny of the Icy Pet, aka ICI PET of the peony-sewerduct-lizardine lineage. A triple-barrelled dynasty whose formative influence on the *Mördervogel* was impossible to ignore. Any effectual reconstructive attempt would be based on the pink-brown-and-coffee-cream polyester reality that harboured the instrumental Icy Pet, and that in conjunction with Hilary, Blulip and Belahg's respective real-life encounters with T***p had given shape to the *Mördervogel* that night in the *DRS* waiting-room. This had called for a trip south of the river. Park

and Bobák had driven the former's *Suzuki Alto*, via Waterloo Bridge and the Elephant & Castle, towards Streatham. They had parked the *Alto* on Brixton Hill. They had entered the *Dental Repair Shop* *k* *ák*, or *air* *hop* *k* *ák*. As always, the carpet had clung to the waiting-room floor. Hello, English Heritage Grade II listed *Prunkstück*. Home to many a living thing, including the Icy Pet. "Carpets are botanical and zoological parks," J. Tierno Jr., Ph.D., microbiologist, immunologist and author of *The Secret Life of Germs*, had said to *Men's Health*. Hilary Park and Rocky Bobák had taken up the carpet in question from the waiting-room floor. They had rolled it up, shouldered it, and carried it out of the door. They had strapped it to the roof of the *Alto*. Park and Bobák had returned to Holborn via the Elephant & Castle and Tower Bridge. They had parked outside  HO. They had shouldered and carried the carpet roll down Theobald's Road towards Blulip's on Harpur Street. In transit, they had attracted a feathered friend. The ff had settled on the carpet roll/collarbone, completing Belua. They had rolled up at Blulip's as Belua.

Now, Hilary unfurled the infamous carpet on the workshop's floor. Strategy B depended on teamwork, Hilary explained. Team 'Reconstruct *Mördervogel*', or Team 'Reco.*Mö*', includes you, you, you and the Icy Pet. The Icy Pet's participation was crucial, according to Hilary. One could not extrapolate *Mövo* from a non-participant Icy Pet. No Icy Pet, no Mv. Mm-mm. Forget it. Ah, ok, Blulip said. Let's try it. You on? You're on. Hilary Park, Rocky Bobák, P.I. Belahg and Tracey B. Lulip gathered on the displaced carpet, banking on its germinal properties. (Tierno, 2010) Peony, peony, lizardine sewer-duct. Wait. How did it go again? Peony, peony, lizardine travesty. Pink-brown-and-coffee-cream polyculiarity...? Something like that. Eventually, a vague presence made herself felt. Not

prominently, but. Competing against an array of peony variations, lizardine sewer-ducts, and botanico-zoological biodiversities, Icy Pet made a reluctant entrance. From many plural realities, the relevant Icy Pet eventually rose. Team 'Reco.Mö' was complete. Team 'Reco.Mö' was good to go. Go, team.

They tried a couple of tested techniques to get the reconstruction of the *Mördervogel* off the ground. Specifically, they tried parlour games. Blulip introduced an A4 sheet of paper and a biro. On the upper eighth of the sheet, Blulip biroed an olivey oval from which two short dashes descended like the outline of a neck or the legs of a bird. Leaving half an inch of the connection lines visible, Blulip folded the top of the sheet over her contribution. Next, Belahg's turn. Belahg diverted the vertical connection lines horizontally outwards, producing an almighty collarbone.

What were they thinking?

The reconstruction of the Mv on the basis of Icy Pet was blighted by the fact that, in transit, Icy Pet had taken on *another* life of her own. A life other than *Mördervogel*. Via the pink-brown-and-coffee-cream carpet-come-collarbhone, with rubber underlay, Icy Pet in conjunction with Hilary, Bobák and the currently undertheorised feathered friend, had given rise to another spook, namely the *Mördervogel's* successor/variant/overlord, *Überbestie* Belua. The *Mördervogel's* broadshouldered, small-headed brothersister Belua was affecting the ongoing reconstructive effort. Unless *Mördervogel* was unusually Belua-like, and had a clavicle to die for, for example. Unless *Mördervogel* had cephalic atrophy. Featherbrain, birdbrain. Unless *Mördervogel* had either of these, *Überbestie* Belua was affecting the ongoing *Mördervogel* reconstruction significantly.

Lately, P.I. Belahg, Tracey Blulip, Rocky Bobák and Hilary Park had started to question the ongoing groundswell proliferation of crackpot a[n]ge[l](nt)s. Wherever they looked,

≈Δ≈ had been proliferating at breakneck speed. They could no longer tell whether they were coming or going. They had better start killing some of them off. Keep them in check. It was unsafe to invent too many angels (Spicer, J., *The Unvert Manifesto*, 1956). They ended up ruling the roost. Already, Team ‘Reco.Mö’ were committed to overthrowing the *Mördervogel*. They were in the process of taking the *Mörder≈Δ≈* down. They should have started, however, with crackpot Belua. But they had lost track of Belua. They had let her slip through the net.

P.I. Belahg folded the previously folded part of the paper over her contribution and passed it on. Next, Hilary’s turn. Hilary concentrated on the micro-Ewe off Contamino Park, whom she had brought in connection with the *Mördervogel* that night in the *DRS* waiting-room. Then Hilary let the biro do its thing. *Huch!* Had Hilary let *Belua* do her thing?! Was this Belua’s handiwork? A nondescript thorax emerged, two verticals descending from the almighty collarbone. Hilary folded and passed on the decreasing A4 sheet. She got up and fetched four bottles of *KHelp™* from the mini-*Fridgette™*.

Bobák’s turn next. The vocable ‘HELP’, capital letters, rang in her head. Bobák was the character with latent health difficulties. No one but Hilary knew. Hilary knew. This was Bobák’s immune system beseeching *angelus* Icy Pet. help, Icy Pet, HELP. The biro fell short of channelling the complex event, and Bobák ended up extending Hilary’s verticals. In other words, Bobák was producing a generic midriff. Oh dear.

Next, Blulip’s turn. What if Blulip was wearing her *Christopher Ala* shark-print T-shirt. What if hundreds of sharks were playing along. What if, for Blulip, *KHelp™* evoked Colt. What if *KHelp™* evoked Diamond-Jaws Colt, Tiger-like Colt, Shark-Prowess Colt, Prior-to-being-murdered-by-*Mördervogel* Colt? What if, for Blulip, *KHelp™* evoked Hooked-onto-Nigel Colt, Killer-Appetite Colt, Kelp-Overdose Colt? (What if, inadvertently, kelp, or Nigel!?, had

killed Colt?) Channelling Colt, Blulip drew like a person possessed. Blulip wielded the biro. Her jaw muscles tensed. Blulip produced a magnificent row of cuspidate teeth. Blulip biroed four magnified fangs across the remaining half of the sheet. Like this: VVVV. In lieu of, say, lower extremities. One might have expected the lower extremities of their Exquisite Corpse there. VVVV's cusps toed the terminal edge of the A4 sheet of paper. Game over, Hilary said. Unfolding the sheet, Belahg unveiled the group's concerted efforts at capturing the *Mördervogel*. A sketch emerged of small-headed, broad-shouldered and four-legged Belua, rather than anyone else. This should not have come as a surprise.

17. BIKINI ATOLL

Pre-Bikini Atoll was a 12-year-old from West Croydon when the 6th *Episode* first went out. Pre-Bikini Atoll preferred the gender neutral pronouns 'they'/them', but 'she'/her' were ok, too. Watching Painlevé Hypercamp and AxoLottl on Tulep.tv, Pre-Bikini's eyes almost popped out. Their world (West Croydon) changed. Rather than share the relevant link round their social networks, Pre-Bikini would act upon the 6th *Episode* in significant ways and over a sustained period of time. Over the next 7/8 years, Pre-Bikini would develop AxoLottl's choleric tendencies for comic effect, and into the fully fleshed-out, multi-media persona Bikini Atoll. Pre-Bikini's future act would combine Pro-People Protest and Socialist Striptease. Bikini Atoll would perform a 'Micronesian Demon Girl' for example, haunting cardboard cutouts of U.S. colonisers. The cardboard cutout of U.S. colonisers would stand in for imperialists worldwide, and across history. By the time they were 18, Bikini Atoll would hold a residency not at the RVT (Royal Vauxhall Tavern), nor at The Glory in Faggerston, but with a *nouveau*-anarcho

cabaret troupe called 'The Fun Avant-garde'. 'The Fun Avant-Garde' would perform predominately around Penge and Surbiton. Perhaps they would sink without trace.

18. DEADWOOD-TO-DYNAMO AUDIENCE PRIZE

Belua's head had been living at Blulip's for weeks now. The head appeared to reside behind a paint pot. In spite of her bright turquoise tumour, the head seemed fine. She had been bounding across the workbench like an ebullient micro-stallion. Bounding, the head left footprints all over the workbench. She left footprints all over their concertinaed Exquisite Corpse. Her tracks were shaped like 1.5 cm ø horseshoes. They were the tracks of a mini-filly. The head's tracks were shaped like 1.5 cm ø kidneys, slightly contracting. Tiny kidneys, slightly puckered up. Maroon-coloured kidneys, a little too crooked and too tightly curled up for their own good. They littered the workbench and Team 'Reco.Mö's *Cadavre Exquis*. Tonight was a big night for Team 'Reco.Mö'. A big deal. Tracey B. Lulip, P.I. Belahg, Hilary Park and Rocky Bobák had gathered at Blulip's to televise live their *Cadavre Exquis*. This was the mugshot they had extrapolated for televisual purposes, and that had come to depict *Überbestie* Belua. It was Saturday night. From 8.15pm, Tulep.tv's first Saturday night live television show was to be aired. The show would adapt a BOLO (Be On the Look-Out) or ATL (Attempt To Locate) format. The show would adapt a format that was referred to as BOLO (Be On the Look-Out) or ATL (Attempt To Locate), in shop language. Their angels had been proliferating at breakneck speed and they needed containing. There were so many of them now. They no longer knew whether they were coming or going. Team 'Reco.Mö' had spent weeks Combating A Localised Evil, for example. They had been trying to take out the *Mördervogel*. But

Combating A Localised Evil, if anything, had fuelled the dynamication of deadwood. This, the *Cadavre Exquis*, was not the face of localised evil. This was Belua. (Or was it.) Belua was just another adrenalsed angel interfering with events. Belua was just another crackpot $\approx \Delta \approx$ that a cooperative public should Be On the Look-Out for. That a cooperative public should BOLO (Be On the Look-Out) for, ATL (Attempt To Locate), and HD, help deactivate. Render inoperative.

Live punditry would be provided by Hilary Park and Rocky Bobák. Co-pundit Park was wearing her Helper Cell T-shirt and rolled up jeans. She was wearing her *Nasir Mazhar* cap with high-camp side pencil holder. Employing the workbench as a makeshift dressing room table, Bobák and Park helped each other get ready. Bobák was touching up war-paint around Hilary's eyes and forehead. Co-pundit Bobák was wearing joggers, tennis socks and *adidas* trainers. *Oben*, Bobák was *ohne*. Bobák was *Oben-Ohne*, Bobák was topless. Can we have the heating on in the television studio, please? Park called. A fresh scar descended from Bobák's chest down her blue-hued abdomen. Rainbow coloured *haematomata* littered the area butterfly-like. Genitalia-shaped insects and worms bellied beneath Bobák's filigree ribcage. One too many kidneys bellied beneath Bobák's *spitzigem* ribcage. Three kidneys: two home-grown, one shop-bought. It was standard transplantation procedure to leave defunct kidneys in place. How is a kidney transplant performed? According to *NHS Choices*, a left donor kidney is implanted on your right side; a right donor kidney is implanted on your left side. This facilitated ureter-to-urinary-bladder suturing, apparently. Copying the crescent shapes that covered the *Cadavre Exquis*, Hilary drew thick maroon lipstick across Bobák's colourful torso and face. Colonising Bobák's already colourful torso and face were 1.5 cm diameter kidney Nr. 4, 1.5 cm diameter kidney Nr. 5, 1.5 cm diameter kidney Nrs. 6, 7, 8. Hilary kept adding

1.5 cm diameter lipstick kidneys. 9, 10. When she put down the *Manhattan Berry Baby™* lipstick, an army of back-up organs, the size of a leech each, were colonising Bobák's already colourful torso and face. Like this, Bobák turned to the camera. Good evening. Good evening, global underbelly. Your host for the evening, "We're live," Blulip said. Co-pundits Bobák and Park framed the concertinaed mugshot, the *Cadavre Exquis* that had been blu-tacked to the wall behind them.

"Do you or does anyone you know have any knowledge of her or one similar," Hilary began. But rather than issue the BOLO, or the ATL. Rather than issue the BOLO (Be On the Look-Out), or the ATL (Attempt To Locate), and ask a cooperative public to participate in the containment of deadwood obstreperousness. Rather than issue the BOLO, or the ATL, Hilary stopped short. She was undergoing a change of mind, live. A significant *Sendepause* occurred. A radio silence. Seelonce, sehlawnce, *silenzio*. Flat airwaves. Hilary looked at her topless co-pundit. Bobák returned the look. Then Hilary put her left arm around Bobák's shoulders. And Bobák put her right arm around Hilary's shoulders. Doubling their chest girth, they began re(as)sembling the original fourlegger, the almighty Belua. Doubling their shoulder length, they effectively began re(as)sembling the original Belua. And rather than issue the BOLO, or the ATL, Belua performed a significant U-ey. Half-formed Belua performed *eine radikale Kehrtwendung*. A drastic U-turn. Belua's ideas re Saturday night entertainment departed significantly from both, the BOLO and ALT formats. Belua believed in freak proliferation. "Pro Dynamo Deadwood!" Belua bellowed. There can never be too many crackpot agents. Belua offered this half-formed wisdom, that there could never be too much hyperactive riffraff. Pro Dynamo Deadwood! Pro for 'proliferate'. Now Bobák's fist flew up. Bobák agreed with Belua. There was nothing like backup. Already Bobák

regretted their previous stance re the *Mördervogel*. Why do away with her? There was nothing like killer backup. Look at the rate at which we disintegrate, Bobák said. We could use any support we might get. "In Scotland, *in vitro* production of human organs from stem cells has been making remarkable progress," Hilary said. Yes, Bobák had heard of this new research in Scotland. Meanwhile, we are launching a competition, Belua told an uninitiated live audience. Instead of the advertised BOLO bulletin, we are presenting the Deadwood-to-Dynamo (?) Audience Prize. The prize, albeit brand-new, has many patron saints already. Icy Pet is a patron saint of the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Prize. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte is a patron saint of the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize. Orsun Ursol is a patron saint of the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize. Painlevé Hypercamp and AxoLottl are patron saints of the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize. The new UUs, Colt, Healthy-lips, the FtM/TG legion, Peggy and the sharks are patron saints of the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize. We are inviting a co-operative public to submit their propositions for a Tulep.tv Season Finale. Low budget productions of epic proportions, format discretionary. Anything legible eligible. Tulep.tv are looking for this season's finale, or the 8th *Episode*. Accepting submissions now. Do the general public. Want to add. Riffraff. Add your riffraff to ours. There can never be too many madcap angels on Tulep.tv. Belua brandished her Herculean chest. Forget Atl, forget Bolo. Who, for example, was A-Bolo-tl? Co-operative public, we are asking you, bring us Abolotl! The willy-nilly invention of $\approx\Delta\approx$ might carry significant risks. But it is unsafer not to invent any angels. It is entirely unsafe to uninvent angels. This is what we think at Tulep.tv. What do you think?! Cut, camera operator Blulip said.

P.I. Belahg on the laptop switched to adverts, a 10 seconds ad of Hilary Park enjoying a glass of *KHelp™*, then entered a non-transmission period. Team 'Resu.*Mö*' (Team 'Resurrect *Mördervogel*') looked at each other. Okeh. Ok? Ohki. Deadwood-to-Dynamo?! Season Finale?! Ok then. Everyone liked the idea. Half-formed Belua disbanded.

19. *EINE GANZ VORZÜGLICHE LEICHE, UN CADAVRE EXQUIS*, AND BELOVED

Out of hold, rainbow-coloured Rocky Bobák disappeared against the paint splattered workbench. Without Hilary's support, Bobák approximated a corpse rather than anything more exquisite. You know how Freddy Mercury appeared in *The Show Must Go On* video? Hilary handed Bobák a Helper Cell T-shirt. It was 10 days since Bobák's operation. But for Hilary, the lipstick marks on Bobák's body evoked not the recent past, but two distant pasts. 1872 and 1991. Moritz Kaposi, Hungarian Dermatologist, on the one hand. And *eine ganz vorzügliche Leiche, un Cadavre Exquis*, and extremely beloved, on the other. For Hilary, the *Berry Baby™* marks on Bobák's body evoked the past, 1872, on the one hand. Originally described by Moritz Kaposi, Hungarian Dermatologist, Kaposi's sarcoma is caused by herpesvirus 8 (HHV8). Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) is a systemic disease that presents with cutaneous lesions. In the 1980s, KS became known as an AIDS-related illness, AIDS being an acronym for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. On the grounds of its noticability and depictability, KS became known as the AIDS-defining symptom. Herpesvirus 8 (HHV8) is one of 7 known concoviruses. HHV8 is transmitted by organ transplantation or very deep kissing. For Hilary, the *Berry Baby™* marks on Bobák's body merged two distinct pasts, 1872

and 1991, and fetched them into the present. In 1991, 17-year-old Hilary's 41-year-old uncle had died of pneumonia within 40 days of his diagnosis with HIV. Hilary's uncle had not left the hospital after his diagnosis with Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection (HIV). For 30 of 40 days he had been artificially respired. For 30 of 40 days he had died on life support. Within 40 days of his diagnosis with HIV, Hilary's uncle had died. On the other hand, Hilary's uncle's 36-year-old boyfriend had survived without wanting to. After Hilary's uncle's death, Hilary's uncle's boyfriend had lived on to buy every available book on the subject of 'Life in the Afterlife', 'Afterlife Communication (16 Proven Methods)', 'Engaging Descriptions of the Afterlife from Someone Living There', 'The Afterlife is as Real as This Life', and 'Your Eternal Self'. During this period (aka After Life), Hilary had founded the Helper Cell action group. Helper Cell had been an attempt to de-individualise AIDS, and a subdivision of more global forms of AIDS-related activism for example *ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power)*. In '91, in Årø, DK, Helper Cell had been a one member action group. For most of its history, Helper Cell had been a cell of one. Årø was rural DK. For most of its history, Helper Cell, as an action cell, had failed. It had fallen flat on its face. Helper Cell had helped no one. Helper Cell was an LGBTQI action group with pent-up activist potential. For Hilary now, the marks on Bobák's torso and face evoked Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) and Freddy Mercury. But Bobák's marks were tiny reinforcement organs. They were make-up renal machines. With lipstick kidney support, Rocky Bobák had been recovering from surgery splendidly. This was not the past (1872/1991). This was 201X, and the Helper Cell Ts were working.

20. SEASON FINALE

Look at it. Without its negligible head, the *Cadavre Exquis* resembled a Maxillary Molar. Without its already negligible head, the *Cadavre Exquis*'s bulbous body + VVVV extremities approximated a 4-canal Maxillary Molar. Without its silly Belua-head, this Exquisite Corpse resembled a toxic tulip. Toxic Tulep?! No, tulip. A topsy-turvy toxic tulip. Headless, the *Cadavre Exquis* looked like Orsun Ursol. Hello Orsun Ursol, you friendly, genderqueer ghost! You friendly chalk faery and PacMan Ghost. Hello hello. We missed you. Blulip, it's Orsun Ursol, returning in style! Having largely disintegrated into filth on the lino floor, Orsun Ursol had now reappeared in Exquisite-Corpse-shape. P.I. Belahg did not know it yet, but this was the beginning of a grand finale on Harpur Street, WC1N. This was a Monday evening after Saturday's impromptu launch of the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize. Unsuspectingly, P.I. Belahg and Blulip had been watching TV. They did not know it yet, but Orsun Ursol had not come on her own.

The bell went. It was Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost. It was pre-Bikini-Atoll's interpretation of a Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost. Pre-Bikini, a 12-year-old from West Croydon, had based their Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost on the Orsun-Ursol-like *Cadavre Exquis* broadcast on Tulep.tv. Killing the universalist White Bedsheet Ghost, pre-Bikini's Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost was a Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize submission. As Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost, Pre-Bikini had come to submit herself in the flesh. Heh, Blulip! We have a forerunner. 12-year-old Pre-Bikini has taken an early lead. Pink&Brown Bedsheet killed the White Bedsheet Ghost dead. Boo! Gone. Oops, there was universalist White Bedsheet Ghost again. Watch out, Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost. It's behind you. Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost whirled around, re-annihilating the White

Bedsheet Nightmare. They killed, it returned, they killed, it returned. Kill, return, kill, return, kill, return. Kill. It would take the whole evening.

Strong entry, Blulip agreed.

The bell rang again. What fresh hell? Who is it now? It was the Transgender Arabesque with her permanent wave gelled back. Hi! What brings you here? The Transgender Arabesque (aka TA) had come in her capacity of guest judge. She declared herself Chair of the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize Committee. Actually, she declared herself the benchmark. The Transgender Arabesque declared herself the benchmark against which all D.-t.-D. Audience Prize submissions should be measured. The Transgender Arabesque had come in her capacity of gold standard of dynamic deadwood.

Already the standard of submissions to the inaugural Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize was high. Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost for example came up to TA's waist.

"Where's GoldSeXUal?" TA asked. The Transgender Arabesque was looking for the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte. But the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte had yet to return to her former cruising ground. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte, or Sxuse, had yet to revisit her original cruising ground, Blulip replied. Ah, TA cried, Princess Blulip! Where is your headgear? Put your crown on, go on. It's the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize Award Ceremony! Is it?! When, now? Yes. It's the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize Award Ceremony and D.-t.-D. Gala. The Transgender Arabesque indicated her glamorous gown (*fig. v*). "I have my best brogue on," she said. Look. Ok then, Blulip said. Blulip resigned herself to wearing her crown during the ongoing Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize Award Ceremony and D.-t.-D. Gala. But where was it? Where was Princess Blulip's crown? "It's over there," TA hollered. The Transgender Arabesque pointed at the *Cadavre Exquis*, mugshot of Belua, topsy-turvy tulip,

Maxillary Molar, and spitting image of an inverted crown. This isn't my crown, Blulip objected. This is Orsun Ursol's most recent incarnation and the inspiration behind Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost. *Ach so*, TA said. P.I. Belahg, could you find my crown? Blulip asked. Please, P.I. Belahg? "It might take a while," P.I. Belahg admitted. Belahg, Blulip continued. Did you know it's the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize Award Ceremony and D.-t.-D. Gala? No. P.I. Belahg had not known the first thing about it. Let's invite Hilary Park and Rocky Bobàk, Blulip said. Belahg, call them? Tell them that Orsun Ursol, Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost, and the Transgender Arabesque are already here. Ok. P.I. Belahg rang Hilary Park. "Who's there?" Hilary said. "All the $\approx\Delta\approx$," Belahg replied. It's the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize Award Ceremony and D.-t.-D. Gala, and riffraff are gathering on Harpur Street. Come? "Yes," Hilary said and hung up.

Tracey Biryukov Lulip was wearing her *Christopher Ala* white/orange shark-print T-shirt and camouflage joggers from *Tesco* for the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize Award Ceremony and D.-t.-D. Gala. No crown. P.I. Belahg was wearing her *Beirendonck* skirt and Pegasus print sweater (*fig. vi*). Now what, the Transgender Arabesque said. Let's pick a winner, Belahg said. We must have a winner. Peggy on Belahg's sweater reared. Peggy, for one, was raring to go. 'On y va!' ran towards the hem of Belahg's sweater in metallic lettering. Let's go, let's go! 'Let's go' did not mean 'let's-get-the-hell-out-of-here' now, but 'let's get going'. P.I. Belahg, Blulip, the Transgender Arabesque, Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost, Peggy and hundreds of *Christopher Ala* sharks crowded around the white plastic laptop. Blulip entered her password: BeLAhG <3 <3 <3. Oho! The D.-t.-D. online manager was brimming with submissions, comprising anything from traditional to multi-media formats.

The Deadwood-to-Dynamo criterion stipulated that she who turned Deadeadwood into Dynamost should be the winner of the inaugural Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize. She who turned piss into gold. The D.-t.-D. Committee went through the online submissions with the Deadwood-to-Dynamo criterion in mind. Eventually, P.I. Belahg and Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost proposed a shortlist. Blulip and the sharks objected. What, this and not this? Blulip and the sharks challenged P.I. Belahg and Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost's proposed shortlist. The self-appointed Chair of the D.-t.-D. Committee, TA, strongly opposed, too.

The bell went again. "Tracey Biryukov Lulip, Director General of Tulep.tv?" Yes? It was a satellite from the Arts Council England (ACE). In Socialist Britain, the ACE was pioneering a satellite system. It was designed actively to target those who lacked the specific language (Oxford English) to apply and succeed through the conventional channels. It was a proactive equal ops scheme. Kept the welfare bill lower, too. Tulep.tv's trailblazing programming had piqued this satellite's interest. Isn't this Healthy-lips over there? the ACE satellite cried. And aren't they the new UUs? As featured in the 2nd *Episode*? Seeing the new UUs of Tulep.tv in the flesh helped loosen this satellite's purse strings.

The doorbell again. It was Channel 4. Channel 4 was not here to follow up on Querbird. Forget Querbird. Nor did Channel 4 think that Tulep.tv had a future on national TV. However, Channel 4 did think that the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize might be of potential interest to national audiences. In Socialist Britain, Channel 4 was committed to representing inspirational working class activity on public-service TV. It responded to public demand for inspirational migrant and QTIPoC (Queer/Trans/Intersex Persons of Colour) representation 24/7. The D.-t.-D. Audience

Prize ethos and idea had legs, Channel 4 said. We would like to invest. Oh great, the ACE satellite said. Channel 4 is investing. The Arts Council England was now in the position to offer its award to Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost. Here you go, Pink&Brown. Both public bodies left standing order forms (enter your bank details here), then left.

Finally, Hilary Park and Rocket Bazcjk arrived. They were wearing their Helper Cell T-shirts and colourful joggers. Park was wearing her *Nashir Mazhar* camp cap with the side pencil holder, and Bazcjk was wearing hair clips in her short boy's hair cut. Hello, Park, hello, Bazcjk.

The name 'Bazcjk' is a homophone of the translation of a homophonic translation (into German) of Bobák. The sequence went Bobák, *Pobacke*, Butt-Cheek, Bazcjk, apparently. That's great, Blulip said. Thanks, Bazcjk said.

Who won? Hilary cried. Have we missed it? I'm afraid, you just missed the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Award Ceremony, Blulip said. The Chair of the D.-t.D. Committee, TA, has announced a winner and runner-up. But the D.-t.D. Gala continues to rage. Ah ok, Hilary said. What's with them?! Pink&Brown Bedsheet Ghost sat on their substantial Arts Council England award, crying. They hadn't won. Who won?! Bazcjk reiterated. Winner of the inaugural Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize was Afafa F. from Hackney Downs. Afafa had staged a version of *Spartacus* on her 30 sq ft balcony with pigeon netting. Runner-up was P.I. Belahg for OperaBo. P.I. Belahg? Runner-up? OperaBo?!

21. *PLATZE*, BO!

What was OperaBo? Was OperaBo operatic? Operative? Or what? Let's go back a day or two. The day before yesterday. Let's start with Beau.

P.I. Belahg decided to give the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize a go. She fancied her chances. When she started working on her submission, she did not anticipate OperaBo as such. She did not anticipate anything. Remember the aqua-*bleu* budgerigar figurine with the varicose-veined, goose-bumped and otherwise featureless 'hard test' head? The aqua-*bleu* penultimate model that the camera had not loved? P.I. Belahg attempted to film her. But oh dear. Beau was so ugly. In terms of the D.-t.-D. Audience Prize, P.I. Belahg saw her hopes dwindling. Look at the spoiler. The D.-t.-D. Committee wouldn't give Beau a second look. What now? How to improve her work? P.I. Belahg was considering her options. That's how Bo came in.

Bo was one of Rocky Bobák's placebos. On top of her lipstick reinforcement organs and her Helper Cell T, Rocky Bobák was recruiting oral placebos. A placebo is a medically ineffectual substance. But even before P.I. Belahg, Tracey B. Lulip, Hilary Park, and Rocky Bobák had embraced the Deadwood-to-Dynamo principle, ineffectuals had been running this show. Dummies had long loomed large at Blulip's on Harpur Street, wheeling and dealing and calling the shots. There were no ineffectual substances around here. Only dynamic deadwood. Therein lay P.I. Belahg's cunning. P.I. Belahg was banking on Bo having an effect on Beau. 'Placebo' stands for 'I shall please'. P.I. Belahg put Bo and Beau next to each other, so that Bo might exert a pleasant influence upon Beau.

Nothing, however, so far. Filming Bo next to Beau had not improved Belahg's shot. Ok. Now what.

Remarkably, '*Platze, Bo!*' is German for 'Bo, Explode!'. '*Platze*' translates as 'Explode'. '*Platze, Bo*' gave P.I. Belahg her idea. First, the creative detective bisected Bo. Bo was a telescope cellulose capsule. P.I. Belahg pulled Bo apart, emptying her, Bo, of her usual content (potato starch). Now

there were two cellulose thimbles. P.I. Belahg filled one of the thimbles with a medically inert, but pyrotechnically potent household chemical (potassium nitrate off the heads of matches). Then she joined the two halves back together, restoring Bo. Finally, P.I. Belahg glued Bo into Beau's face moustache-like. Better. Prettier Beau. Gayer.

Still, not gay enough. P.I. Belahg returned Beau to her regular position. As the penultimate model, *aqua-bleu* Beau's place was next to Healthy-lips. Perhaps Healthy-lips, too, could appear in Belahg's video? A fail-safe representation of Tulep, Healthy-lips had been P.I. Belahg's primary investigative lead.

Ultimately, 'OperaBo' did not stand for 'operatic'. 'OperaBo' stood for 'I shall work'. Bo worked. Bo's potassium nitrate content, once lit, produced small pyrotechnic emissions. P.I. Belahg was recorded indoor fireworks on her phone. Suddenly, fiery Beau fell like a domino tile, knocking neighbouring Healthy-lips smackbam in the tooth with her forehead. The *aqua-bleu* penultimate model Beau fell sideways, smashing her forehead directly into Healthy-lips's lip. Not that the headbutt affected Healthy-lips's balance. Not that it knocked out her human tooth. Rather, Beau's forehead, on impact, coloured Healthy-lips's tooth *aqua-bleu*. *Aqua-bleu* = turquoise. Bright turquoise stuck to Healthy-lips's Maxillary Bicuspid. Claspig a turquoise pompom in her beak, a RL budgerigar was galloping across the workbench like a formidable micro-horse. P.I. Belahg did a double take. Turquoise pompom *vis-à-vis* turquoise bicuspid, RL budgerigar and Healthy-lips looked identical. The investigatory lead pointed towards the RL budgerigar. That there was Tulep. "Blulip? Blulip!" P.I. Belahg could not wait to tell Blulip, Gilbert, or George, her partner in crime, life, and everything.



fig. vi

Appendix 1. TULEP.TV: THE COMPLETE SERIES

The 1st *Episode* features chalk/tooth faery Orsun Ursol.

The 2nd *Episode* showcases the inquisitive FtM/TG army in the context of the new UUs and Healthy-lips. The battlefield *d'Amour*.

The 3rd *Episode* features the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte. The GoldSeXUal StatuEtte is a compound character, comprising Hilary Park balancing on the back of the new UU fibreglass cygnet, and Blulip wearing a gold crown.

The 4th *Episode* features the GoldSeXUal StatuEtte encountering the Transgender Arabesque. Two LGBTQI* giants navigate the constrained space of Blulip's council flat/workshop. This is Tulep.tv's breakthrough episode in terms of audience reception. It first appears in the comment section of the 3rd *Episode*.

The 5th *Episode* depicts dead Colt in surreal lighting.

The 6th *Episode* features Belahg and Blulip as AxoLottl and Painlevé Hypercamp, engaging in hypocamp hanky-panky.

The 7th *Episode* features Hilary Park and Rocky Bobák framing the *Cadavre Exquis* mugshot. The original BOLO format turns into a Call for Submissions. Launch of the Deadwood-to-Dynamo Audience Prize.

The 8th *Episode* was the Season Finale. TBC.

Appendix 2: P.I. LOVEDAYS WALL CHART

Fixated on establishing Tulep.tv's series's plot, P.I. Loveday from Holborn Detectives PLC had been constructing a series of wallcharts. "What's wrong with a theme and a plot we can all follow?" (Split Britches, *Belle Reprieve*, 1995) P.I. Loveday had been asking herself the same question.

1, 2, 5, 3, 6, 7, 4:

1. Murder!
2. Murder in Disneyland® Paris. They're sending the army into Disneyland®. Who's that in the background? The one with the blood-smeared mouth? She must have done it.
5. Another dead body floating in Lake Disney®.
3. Inspector GoldSeXUal arrives on scene. All will be well.
6. Another stabbing.
7. They issue a BOLO. An ALT.
4. Inspector Transgender Arabesque replaces Inspector GoldSeXUal who had failed to press charges against anyone. No conclusion.

1, 3, 4, 2, 7, 5, 6:

1. The lead actor is the one that looks like a PacMan Ghost, or a crown in various positions. There she lies on the floor, relaxing.
3. Now the lead actor is riding on the head of another character. She parades through a populous landscape like a king.
4. More characters enter the scene. This does not affect the lead actor and King. King keeps on riding.
2. A military uprising in King's populous country. Now that things are getting difficult, King is nowhere to be seen. King has disappeared.
7. King is on the news! Having deserted her country, King is reported for going AWOL. AWOL is a military term for Absent With Out Leave.
5. They consult a crystal ball. The crystal ball suggests that King is dead.

6. King is dead and does not feature in this scene. King's subjects prosper in King's absence.

4, 2, 5, 3, 1, 7, 6:

4. It's Mother and Father. Mother is pregnant. She is wearing a maternity dress.
2. They have got a number of children already.
5. They have no money, no gold. They wish they had.
3. But they don't. Father leaves Mother and abandons his children. Here he is, on his own.
1. Mother gives birth to this baby.
7. This is the baby with new adoptive parents.
6. Mother, not pregnant now, gets herself a female lover. She looks much better for it. Entirely different.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1:

2. An enigma is posed, such as 'Why are we here?', or 'Why is there something rather than nothing?'. Hoofed Cygnet vows to find the truth.
3. Hoofed Cygnet embarks on her journey, but others are holding her back. They are weighing her down.
4. Fairy Arabesque appears. She tells Hoofed Cygnet to persevere and to look for the truth in unlikely places.
5. Does the truth lie at the bottom of a lake?
6. Is love the truth?
7. Is the truth haunting you, too?
1. There is only the truth now. The truth ate everyone else alive.

Bibliography

- Anonymous (2008) *BTFA (Butch Tops Fuck Anything)*. London, New York: Independent.
- Acker, Kathy & Friedman, Ellen G. (1989) A Conversation with Kathy Acker By Ellen G. Friedman. *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* 9.3, pp. 12-22.
- Acker, Kathy (1986) *Don Quixote, which was a Dream*. London: Paladin.
- Ahmed, Sara (2014) *Willful Subjects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ahmed, Sara (2008) Some Preliminary Remarks on the Founding Gestures of the 'New Materialism'. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 15(1), pp. 23–39.
- Ainsworth, Claire (2015) Sex Redefined. *Nature* 518, pp. 288–291.
- Adebayo, Mojisola (2011) *Plays One*. London: Oberon Books.
- Austin, J.L. (1962/1975) *How to Do Things with Words*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Bagemihl, Bruce (2001) *Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity*. New York: Stonewall Inn Editions.
- Barad, Karen (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Barad, Karen (2003) Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28 (3), pp. 801-831.
- Barnes, Djuna (1936/2007) *Nightwood*. London and Boston: Faber & Faber.
- Bergvall, Caroline et al. (eds.) (2012) *I'll Drown My Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*. Los Angeles: Les Figues Press.
- Bergvall, Caroline (2012) The Conceptual Twist: A Foreword. In Bergvall, Caroline et al (eds.) *I'll Drown My Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*. Los Angeles: Les Figues Press, pp. 18-22.
- Bernstein, Charles (1987/1992) Artifice of Absorption. In *Apoetics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, pp. 9-90.
- Bernstein, Charles (1986/2001) *Stray Straws and Straw Men* (1984) in *Content's Dream: Essays 1975-1984*, Evanston Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Bies, Michael & Gamper Michael (Hg.) (2011), *Experiment und Literatur III: 1890-2010*, "Es

- ist ein Laboratorium, ein Laboratorium fuer Worte*". Goettingen: Wallstein.
- Blackman, Lisa (2014) Affect and Automaticity: Exploring an Analytics of Experimentation. *Subjectivity* 7(4), pp. 362-384.
- Blackman, Lisa (2011) Frantisek Flounders: A Response. *8fold* library, <http://www.8fold.org/library.html#>, accessed 1 March 2016.
- Blackman, Lisa et al. (2008) Creating Subjectivities. *Subjectivity* 22(1), pp.1-27.
- Bök, Christian (2015) *The Xenotext: Book 1*. Toronto: Coach House Books.
- Bök, Christian (2013) *The Xenotext (A Progress Report)*. Lecture presented at Simon Fraser University, 25th January 2013, Canada, <https://vimeo.com/58653647>, accessed 3rd March 2016.
- Bök, Christian (2011) Blog post. Silliman's blog: A weblog focused on contemporary poetry and poetics, 17 May 2011, <http://ronsilliman.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/christian-b-o-k-this-is-one-of-notes.html>, accessed 2 April 2016.
- Bök, Christian (2008) The Xenotext Experiment. *SCRIPT-Ed* 5(2), pp. 227-231.
- Bök, Christian (2001a) *EUNOIA*. Toronto: Coach House Books.
- Bök, Christian (2001b) *Pataphysics: The Poetics of an Imaginary Science*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Bök, Christian (2001c) After Language Poetry. In Lundgerg, Anders et al. (eds.) *OEI 7 After Language Poetry: 10 Statements*, <http://www.ubu.com/papers/oei/bok.html>, accessed 13 April 2016.
- Bourne, Bette, Shaw, Paul, Shaw, Peggy, & Lois Weaver (1991/1996) Belle Retrieve: A Collaboration. In Case, Sue Ellen (ed.) *Split Britches*. New York/Oxon: Routledge.
- Bray, Joe, et al. (2012) Introduction. In Bray, Joe et al. (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 1-18.
- Bridgeman, Laura & Nicholson, Serge (2011) *There is No word for It*. London: Hot Pencil Press.
- Brophy, Brigid (1969/2002) *In Transit*. Chicago, IL: Dalkey Archive Press.
- Brooke-Rose, Christine (1964/2006) Out. In *Omnibus*. Manchester: Carcanet, pp. 7-198.
- Brooke-Rose, Christine (1991) *Stories, Theories and Things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Brooks Takahashi, Ginger, Hardy, K8 and Roysdon, Emily (2002) *LTTR #1: Lesbians To The Rescue*. New York: Independent.
- Buchanan, Rachael (2011) Poet writes verse in bug's gene and receives reply. *BBC News Science and Environment*, 28th April, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13001382>, accessed 4th February 2014.
- Butler, Judith (1993a) *Bodies that matter*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith (1993b) Critically Queer. *GLQ: A Journal for Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, pp. 17-32.
- Butler, Judith (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Burger, Mary et al. (eds.) (2004/2010) *Biting the Error: Writers Explore Narrative*. Toronto: Coach House Books.
- Burroughs, William (1959/2015) *Naked Lunch*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Callard, Felicity & Fitzgerald, Des (2014) Social Science and Neuroscience beyond Interdisciplinarity: Experimental Entanglements. *Theory, Culture & Society* 0(0), pp. 1-30.
- Callard, Felicity & Papoulias, Stan (2010) Biology's Gift: Interrogating the Turn to Affect. *Body & Society* 16 (1), pp. 29-56.
- Capek, Karel (1920/1975) *R.U.R and The Insect Play*. Oxford and London: Oxford Paperbacks.
- Case, Sue Ellen (ed.) (1996) *Split Britches*. New York/Oxon: Routledge.
- Cixous, Helene (1976) The Laugh of the Medusa. *Signs: Journal of Women, Culture and Society* 1(4), pp. 875-893.
- Conrad, CA (2016) Chocolate Crack on a Stick. *Tripwire: A journal of poetics* 10, pp. 82-91.
- Conrad, CA & Lin, Candice (2015) Up in the Puppet. *Animal Shelter: Sex/Art/Literature* 4, pp. 200-201.
- Cortázar, Julio (1975/2014) *Fantomas versus the multinational vampires: An unattainable Utopia*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e)/MIT Press.
- Cortázar, Julio (1962/2000) *1962: A Model Kit*. New York: New Directions.
- Cortázar, Julio (1956/1998) Axolotl. *Bestiary: Selected Stories*. London: Harvill Press, pp. 161-165.
- Coyote, Ivan E. (2000) *Close To Spiderman*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

- Crewe, Sarah & Mayer, Sophie (eds.) (2014) *Glitter Is A Gender*. London: Contraband.
- Crisp, Quentin (1968/1990) *The Naked Civil Servant*. Glasgow: Flamingo.
- Despret, Vinciane (2008) The Becomings of Subjectivity in Animal Worlds. *Subjectivity* 23(1), pp. 123–13.
- Duffy, Maureen (1966/1989) *The Microcosm*. London: Virago Press.
- Dworkin, Craig & Goldsmith, Kenneth (eds.) (2010) *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*. Evanston: North Western University Press.
- Forrest-Thomson, Veronica (1978) *Poetic Artifice: A Theory of Twentieth Century Poetry*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne (2015a) Getting Personal. *Boston Review*, 9 March, <http://bostonreview.net/wonders/anne-fausto-sterling-getting-personal-gene-expression>, accessed 16 April 2016.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne (2015b) Intersex: The Concept of Multiple Sexes in Not New. *Nature* 519, p. 291.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne (2000) *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne (1993) *The Five Sexes*. *The Sciences* 33, pp. 20–24.
- Foucault, Michel (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Keller, Evelyn Fox (1995) *Refiguring Life: Metaphors of Twentieth Century Biology*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Franklin, Sarah (2013) *After IVF: the reproductive turn in social thought*. Inaugural lecture, 30 October 2013, University of Cambridge, UK.
- Franklin, Sarah (2000) Life Itself: Global Nature and the Genetic Imaginary. In Franklin, Sarah, Lury, Celia, & Stacey, Jackie (2000) *Global Nature, Global Culture*. London: Sage, pp. 188-227.
- Franklin, Sarah, Lury, Celia, & Stacey, Jackie (2000) *Global Nature, Global Culture*. London: Sage.
- Fraser, Miriam Motamedi (2015) *Word: Beyond Language, Beyond Image*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Friedman, Ellen G. & Fuchs, Miriam (eds.) (1989) *Breaking The Sequence: Women's Experimental Fiction*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Fuller, Matthew (2011) *Elephant & Castle*. New York: Autonomedia.

- Fusco, Maria (2010) *The Mechanical Copula*. Berlin and New York: Sternberg Press.
- Gamper, Michael, Wernli, Martina, & Zimmer, Jörg (Hg.) (2010) *Experiment und Literatur II: 1790-1890: Wir sind Experimente: wollen wir es auch sein!* Göttingen: Wallstein.
- Gamper, Michael, Wernli, Martina, & Zimmer, Jörg (Hg.) (2009) *Experiment und Literatur I: 1580-1790: Es ist nun einmal zum Versuch gekommen*. Göttingen: Wallstein.
- Gamper, Michael (Hg.) (2010) *Experiment und Literatur. Themen, Methoden, Theorien*. Göttingen: Wallstein.
- Garreta, Anne (1986/2015) *Sphinx*. Dallas: Deep Vellum Publishing.
- Goldsmith, Kenneth (2008) *Conceptual Poetics*, 9 June 2008, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2008/06/conceptual-poetics-kenneth-goldsmith/>, accessed 7 May 2016.
- Goldsmith, Kenneth (2007) *Traffic*. Los Angeles: Make Now Press.
- Goldsmith, Kenneth (2005) Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing. *Open Letter: A Canadian Journal for Writing and Theory* 12(7), pp. 108-111.
- Gladman, Renee (2011) *The Ravickians*. St. Lois, MO: Dorothy.
- Glück, Robert (2004/2010) Long Note on New Narrative. In Burger, Mary et al. (eds.) *Biting the Error: Writers Explore Narrative*. Toronto: Coach House Books, pp. 25-35.
- Hacking, Ian (1983) *Representing and Intervening: Introductory topics in the philosophy of natural science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Halberstam, Judith (2011) *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Halberstam, Judith (1996) *Female Masculinities*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hanson, Julie (2007) Drag Kinging: Embodied Acts and Acts of Embodiment. *Body & Society* 13(1), pp. 61-106.
- Haraway, Donna (1997) *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium: FemaleMan meets OncoMouse: Technoscience and Feminism*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Haraway, Donna (1989) *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Haraway, Donna (1988/1991) Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books, pp.183-201.
- Harding, Sandra (1986) *The Science Question in Feminism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Hauser, Marianne (1976/2002) *The Talking Room*. Normal/Tallahassee: FC2.

- Hayles, Katherine N. (1999) *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hayles, Katherine N. (1991/1993) Constraint Constructivism: Locating Scientific Inquiry in the Theatre of Representation. In Levine, George (ed.) *Realism and Representation: Essays on the Problem of Realism in Relation to Science, Literature, and Culture*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 27-43.
- Herrmann, Bettina (2010) Nerven-Poetik um 1800. In Gamper, Michael, Wernli, Martina, & Zimmer, Jörg (Hg.) *Experiment und Literatur II: 1790-1890: Wir sind Experimente: wollen wir es auch sein!* Göttingen: Wallstein, pp. 122-139.
- Hilson, Jeff (2015) *A Barry Bendy Poem*. Norfolk: Oystercatcher Press.
- Hird, Myra J. (2004) *Sex, Gender and Science*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave.
- Horvath, Brooke (1995) Brigid Brophy's It's-All-Right-I'm-Only-Dying Comedy of Modern Manners: Notes on 'In Transit'. *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15 (3), pp. 47-53.
- Ionesco, Eugene (1954/1965) Amédée, or How to Get Rid of It. In *Plays, Volume II*. London: John Calder.
- Jaeger, Peter (2014) *540493390 (research)*. London: Veer Books.
- Jordanova, Ludmilla (ed.) (1986) *Languages of Nature: Critical Essays on Science and Literature*. London: Free Association Books.
- Johnson, B.S. (1973) Introduction. In *Aren't You Rather Young to Be Writing Your Memoirs?* London: Hutchinson & Co, pp. 9-31.
- Johnson, Kent (2008) *Homage to the Last Avant-garde*. Exeter: Shearsman Books.
- King, Katie (1991) Bibliography and a Feminist Apparatus of Literary Production. *TEXT: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship* 5, pp. 91-103.
- Kraus, Chris (1997/2016) *I love Dick*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e)/MIT Press.
- Krause, Marcus & Pethes, Nicolas (Hg.) (2004) *Literarische Experimentalkulturen: Poetologien des Experiments im 19. Jahrhundert*. Würzburg: Koenighausen & Neumann.
- Latour, Bruno (2014) Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene. *New Literary History* 45, pp. 1-18.
- Latour, Bruno (1999) *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
- Latour, Bruno (1987) *Science in Action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

- Latour, Bruno & Woolgar, Steve (1979/1986) *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Lorde, Audre (1982/2001) *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.
- Lykke, Nina & Braidotti, Rosi (eds.) (1996) *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs: Feminist Confrontations with Science, Medicine and Cyberspace*. London and New Jersey: ZED Books.
- Maack, Annegret (1995) Concordia discors: Brigid Brophy's *In Transit*. *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15 (3), pp. 40-45.
- Marchessault, Jovette (1975) *Lesbian Triptych*. Toronto: The Women's Press.
- MacCormack, Carol & Strathern, Marilyn (1980) *Nature, Culture and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mayberry, Maralee, Subramaniam, Banu & Weasel, Lisa H. (eds.) (2001) *Feminist Science Studies: A New Generation*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Mason-John, Valerie aka QUEENIE (1999) *Brown Girl in the Ring: Plays, Prose and Poems*. London: Get A Grip.
- McBride, Eimear (2013) *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing*. Norwich: Galley Beggar Press.
- McCaffery, Steve (2013) *The Darkness of the Present: Poetics, Anachronism and the Anomaly*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.
- McCaffery, Steve (1980/2002) *Panopticon, 1984. Seven Pages Missing: Volume One: Selected Texts 1969-1999*. Ontario: Coach House Books, pp. 233-268.
- McCormack, Chris (ed.) (2015) *Anarchic sexual desires of plain unmarried schoolteachers*. London: Selected Press.
- McHale, Brian (2012) Postmodernism and Experiment. In Bray, Joe et al. (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 141-153.
- McHale, Brian (1987) *Postmodernist Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge.
- McNab, Pamela (1997) Julio Cortázar's 'Axolotl': Literary Archaeology of the Unreal. *The International Fiction Review* 24(1), pp. 12-22.
- Melnick, David (1983/2015) *Men in Aida*. Antwerpen: Uitgeverij
- Mesmer, Sharon (2008) *Annoying Diabetic Bitch*. New York: Combo Books
- Meyer, Stephen (2001) *Irresistible Dictation: Gertrude Stein and the Correlations of Writing and Science*. California: Stanford University Press.

- Middleton, Peter (2015) *Physics Envy: American Poetry and Science in the Cold War and After*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Mitchell, Kaye (2015) Introduction: The Gender Politics of Experiment. In Mitchell, Kaye (ed.) Special Issue: Experimental Writing, *Contemporary Women's Writing* 9(1), pp. 1-15.
- Mol, Annemarie (2002) *The Body Multiple: Ontology in medical practice*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Moore, Steven (1995) Brigid Brophy: An introduction and checklist. *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15(3), pp. 7-11.
- Mulvey, Laura (1975) Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen* 16(3), pp. 6-18.
- Myles, Eileen (2013) *Inferno (A Poet's Novel)*. New York: O/R Books.
- Nelson, Maggie (2016) *The Argonauts*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press
- Quin, Ann (1972/2002) *Tripticks*. Chicago, IL: Dalkey Archive Press.
- Painlevé, Jacques (1934/2008) L'Hippocampe, ou 'Cheval marine'. In *Science is Fiction: 23 Films*. New York: The Criterion Collection. DVD.
- Palmer, Katrina (2010) *The Dark Object*. London: Book Works.
- Perec, Georges (1969/2008) *A Void*. London: Vintage Books.
- Perloff, Marjorie (2012) *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Perloff, Marjorie (2004) *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Pester, Holly (2013) *Making Speech Matter: Recurring Mediations in Sound Poetics and Its Contemporary Practice*. Ph.D. Birkbeck, University of London.
- Pickering, Andrew (1995) *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency & Science*. London and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Preciado, Beatriz (2013) *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. New York: The Feminist Press.
- Rasula, Jed & McCaffery, Steve (eds.) (1998) *Imagining Language: An Anthology*. Cambridge/Massachusetts and London/England: The MIT Press.
- Rheinberger, Hans-Jörg (2013) Über die Kunst, das Unbekannte zu erforschen. In Pazzini, K.-J. et al. (Hg.) *Das Unverfügbare: Wunder, Wissen, Bildung*. Zürich-Berlin: Diaphanes.

- Rheinberger, Hans-Jörg (1997) *Toward a History of Epistemic Things: Synthesizing Proteins in the Test Tube*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Robinson, Sophie (2012) *Queer Time & Space in Contemporary Experimental Writing*. PhD. Royal Holloway, University of London.
- Ross, Fran (1974/2015) *Oreo*. New York: New Directions Paperbook.
- Roussel, Raymond (1914/2013) *Locus Solus*. Surrey: Alma Classics.
- Russ, Joanna (1975/2010) *The Female Man*. London: Gollancz
- Schulman, Sarah (1988/1990) *After Delores*. London: Sheba Feminist Press.
- Scott, Gail (2012) *The Obituary*. New York: Nightboat Books.
- Shaw, Peggy, Weaver, Lois, & Kennerly, James Neal (1995/1996) Lust and Comfort. In Case, Sue Ellen (ed.) *Split Britches*. New York/Oxon: Routledge.
- Silliman, Ron (2011) Blog post, Silliman's blog: A weblog focused on contemporary poetry and poetics, 10 May, <http://ronsilliman.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/deinococcus-radiodurans-future-of.html>, accessed 5 March 2016.
- Smith, Ali (2014) *How To Be Both*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Spahr, Juliana & Young, Stephanie (2005) foulipo. Talk for CalArts Noulipo conference 28-29 October, <http://www.drunkenboat.com/db8/oulipo/feature-oulipo/essays/spahr-young/foulipo.html>, accessed 16 April 2016.
- Spicer, Jack (1956/2008) The Unvert Manifesto and Other Papers Found in the Rare Book Room of the Boston Public Library in the Handwriting of Oliver Charming. By S.. In Gizzi, Peter & Killian, Kevin (eds.) *My Vocabulary did this to me. The Collected Poetry of Jack Spicer*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, pp.74-94
- Stevenson, Sheryl (1991) Language and Gender in Transit: Feminist Extensions of Bakhtin. In Bauer, Dale M. & McKinstry, Susan Janet (eds.) *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic*. New York: State University of New York Press, pp. 181-198.
- Suchman, Lucy (2006) *Human-machine Reconfigurations: Plans and Situated Actions*, Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Themerson, Stefan (1986) *The Mystery of the Sardine*. London and Boston: Faber & Faber.
- Timonen, Maija (2015) *The Measure of Reality*. London: Book Works.
- Waidner, Isabel (2016) *Fantomas Takes Sutton*. In Williams, Eley & Walsh, Joanna (eds.) *3:AM Magazine*, <http://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/fantomas-takes-sutton/>, accessed 9 July 2016.

- Waidner, Isabel (2015a) Dexy the Fiery De-Extinguisher. In Wood, Sarah (ed.) *Dictionary of Lost Languages: An Intervention into Loss*. Cambridge: Art Language Location, pp. 92-97.
- Waidner, Isabel (2015b) Gaudy Bauble: From a Queer Avant-Garde Novella. In Arsanios, Mirene, Atterbury, Daisy & El-Raiss Tarek (eds.) *Makhzin 2: Feminisms*, pp. 28-31.
- Waidner, Isabel (2015c) Bravo, Parrot. In Höflich, Ruth & Waidner, Isabel (eds.) *The Arrow Maker, Journal for Language & Experimentation*, pp. 53- 59.
- Waidner, Isabel (2011) *Frantisek Flounders*. London and Munich: 8fold.
- Waidner, Isabel (2010) *Bubka*. London and Munich: 8fold.
- Waidner, Isabel, Matthews, Donna, & Hiratsuka, Keisuke (2003) *L.O.V.E./NOTHING*, London: Rough Trade/For Us. Vinyl.
- Wark, McKenzie (2011) *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*. London: Verso Books.
- Waugh, Patricia (1984) *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Wren, Jacob (2014) *Polyamorous Love Song*. Toronto, ON: BookThug.
- Williams, Raymond (1977) *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Winnette, Colin (2015) *Coyote*. Los Angeles: Les Figue Press.
- Wittig, Monique (1969/1985) *Les Guérillères*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.